

AKDENİZ UNIVERSITY
THE INSTITUTE OF EDUCATIONAL SCIENCES

RECEP KAZANCI

THE USE OF BLOGS AND THE INTERNET TO ENHANCE THE WRITING SKILLS OF
EFL LEARNERS

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING DEPARTMENT

MA Thesis

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ABSTRACT

In light of innovations in education since the 2000s, various instructional methods and techniques have been developed. Since the teaching of writing is primarily based on use of a course book, there are no authentic readers for students' writings beyond the class teacher; this has a negative effect on learners' motivation, and in many cases, either there is no available technology, or it is not put to effective use in order to make the teaching of writing sufficient to develop learners' skills. Therefore, providing learners with sufficient practice to improve their writing skills is very important. Moreover, various methods and techniques have been applied to encourage learners to practice, not only in class, but also outside the classroom; these have been found to be partially successful. In this study, blog use applications for writing lessons were conducted, and learners' attitudes toward writing were investigated. Thirty students participated in the present study, which was applied at Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages. Based on both the results of the A1 completion exam, which is used to place learners into English classes according to their levels, and a pre-test, learners were divided into two groups; a control group and an experimental group. After the assessment, an Internet use questionnaire was applied to both groups to investigate any attitudes towards using the Internet which might affect the results of the study. When no significant differences were found, the study was conducted over a 6-week period. During the treatment period, the control group took a writing course in which traditional instructional techniques were applied, while, the experimental group was supported through the use of blogs. Throughout the duration of the study, participants of both groups wrote 3 essays, each consisting of a first, second and final draft. Two of the essays were of the compare-contrast type, and the third was a definition essay. At the end of the 6 weeks of treatment, success of the learners was analysed and compared through use of a post-test. In addition to the post-test, in order to determine the learners' attitudes toward the writing course and use of blogs, a blog use evaluation questionnaire was applied to the experimental group. According to the results of the study, it was concluded that using blogs for writing lessons was an effective method to improve student success; in light of the blog use evaluation questionnaire, it was concluded that learners found the writing lessons supported by blogs to be beneficial.

ÖZET

Eğitim teknolojilerindeki gelişmeler ışığında 2000’li yılların başlarından itibaren öğrenenlerin yazma becerilerinin geliştirilmesi için çok çeşitli metodlar ve teknikler kullanılmaya başlanmıştır. Yazma becerisinin geliştirilmesinde öğrencilere ders saatlerinde yapılan uygulamaların sadece kitap bazında kalması, öğrencilerin yazdıkları için dersin öğretim elemanı dışında gerçek bir okuyucunun olmaması motivasyonu eksi yönde etkilemektedir. Bunlara ek olarak teknolojinin dersliklerde olmaması ya da yeterli ve etkin bir şekilde kullanılmaması gibi faktörler bu derslerde yapılan etkinlikleri yetersiz kılmaktadır. Bu sebeple yazma becerisi de dâhil dil öğrenimindeki becerilerin geliştirilmesi için pratik yapılması son derece önemlidir. Ayrıca ders dışında da öğrencinin pratik yapmasını sağlamak ve dersle bağlantısının kopmasını engellemek için çeşitli yöntemler denenmiş ve kısmen başarılı olmuşlardır. Bu çalışmada yazma becerisinin geliştirilmesi için Weblog (blog) uygulaması yapılmış ve sonuçta da öğrencilerin bu dersten edindikleri tecrübe ile memnuniyet durumları ölçülmüştür. Araştırma Akdeniz Üniversitesi Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu’ndan 30 öğrencinin katılımı ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Öğrencilerin seviyeleri, A1 Seviyesi Tamamlama Sınavı ve ön-test uygulamalarının ardından belirlenmiş ve kontrol ve deney grubu olarak ikiye ayrılmıştır. Çalışmaya başlamadan, her iki gruba da çalışmanın sonucunu etkileyebileceği için internet kullanım anketi uygulanmış ve 2 grup arasında anlamlı bir fark bulunmamıştır ve çalışma uygulanmaya başlanmıştır. Çalışmanın uygulanması esnasında kontrol grubu klasik yazma dersi alırken, deney grubu blog kullanımı ile desteklenmiştir. Çalışma boyunca her iki grubun öğrencileri de üçer tane deneme yazısı yazmışlar ve her deneme yazısı birinci, ikinci ve final taslaklarında oluşmuştur. Deneme yazılarının 2 tanesi karşılaştırma, diğeri de tanım, tarif denemesidir. 6 hafta süren çalışmanın ardından öğrencilerin başarıları son-test kullanılarak ölçülmüş, karşılaştırılmıştır ve analiz edilmiştir. Buna ek olarak, deney grubuna, bloglar ile yapılan yazma derslerine yönelik olan tutumlarını saptamak için yazma derslerinde blog uygulanması değerlendirme anketi uygulanmıştır. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına göre, Blog kullanımının öğrenci başarısını artırmada etkin bir yöntem olduğu ve anket bulguları ışığında deney grubu öğrencilerinin yazma dersleri için blog uygulanmasını faydalı buldukları sonucuna ulaşılmıştır.

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CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1. INTRODUCTION

The technological tools which have become a central part of daily life over the last few decades have also taken their place in the world of education, and in all likelihood, technology will continue to be applied for instructional purposes as new generations of teaching and learning tools are developed. Recent innovations in information and communication technologies (ICTs) indicate that the 21st century will most likely be a culture of advanced technological communication (Diakite, 2004). Developments in technology, particularly with respect to ICTs, have led language instructors and researchers to explore alternative teaching and learning environments in order to enhance the skills of language learners. Moreover, innovations in education, particularly in terms of the recent developments in ICT and widespread use of the Internet in many disciplines, have compelled scholars to employ these new technologies in instructional settings in their attempts to provide more authentic environments in terms of language use. Thus, in addition to conventional language teaching methods, approaches and techniques, language instructors have been working to incorporate technology into the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom for a number of years. In view of this fact, various studies have been conducted to examine the effects of technology-enhanced instruction on learner achievement (Stepp-Greany, 2002; Ysseldyke & Bolt, 2007; Zheng, Warschauer, & Farkas, 2011), as well as to explore student attitudes towards technology use in the context of learning (Lee, 2005; Salabery, 2001; Wiebe & Kabata, 2010).

The theoretical foundation for the blending of education and technology is based on Vygotsky's (1978) constructivist learning theory, particularly his socio-constructivist theory. When we look at the historical development of education, the behavioristic and cognitive approaches, which typically emphasize teacher-entered learning, have gradually diminished in importance, since new understandings in the field of education have directed scholars to change the focus of instruction from the teacher to the student (Caner, 2009). As a result, the learning concept of the student-centered approach has come into prominence. Therefore, Vygotsky's theory of constructivism has gained influence, and new instructional approaches connected with constructivism have been developed. In contrast to Piaget's cognitive theory, which places the focus of learning on the individual, Vygotsky put forward the theory of social constructivism, which emphasizes learning through social interaction (Kanuka & Anderson, 1999). As it is well known, social constructivism holds that knowledge is socially

produced by communities of people, and that individuals can increase their personal knowledge by joining knowledge communities. From a social constructivist standpoint, learning is considered as an active, student-centered process in which people construct their knowledge by relating it to their previous experiences in real-life situations through interacting with their social environment. Motschnig-Pitrik and Holzinger (2002) assert that “the Internet and information technologies are principally well-suited to be used with the student-centered approach” (p. 164), since such instruments provide students with the ability to freely explore various instructional materials. For instance, Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) can be considered as a social constructivist-based language teaching method, as it allows individuals to engage in environments and activities that actively involve them in the learning process (Arikan & Khezerlou, 2010, p. 4007). Moreover, it is believed that student-centered learning environments should include reciprocal teaching, peer collaboration, cognitive apprenticeships, problem-based instruction, Web-quests, anchored instruction and other methods that involve learning with others in social constructivist environments (Schunk, 2000).

When attempts to integrate technology into the classroom environment are viewed in terms of the historical development of instructional technologies, it can be claimed that the use of technology in the language classroom began with the use of overhead projectors (OHP) and audio or video cassette players, and it has continued with computers. Dovedan, Seljan, and Vučković (2002) have stated that the widespread use of Internet and Internet aided/based information technologies in every aspect of life have compelled language instructors to make use of such beneficial tools in the teaching of language skills. Accordingly, instructors have begun to incorporate the Internet and its tools, such as discussion forums, mail groups, podcasts, e-portfolios, chat and messenger programs, social networking sites and weblogs into foreign language instruction.

Fodje’s (1994) view that combining education and technology is vital to the learning process is supported by Lancien (1998, as cited in Kartal & Arikan 2010, p.93), who argues that bringing technologies such as the Internet into the classroom feeds and improves learner development through providing authentic audio, textual and visual materials.

The results of previous studies on the use of technology (Arikan & Khezerlou, 2010; Diakite, 2004; Fitzpatrick, 2004; Greany, 2002; Warschauer, 2004), especially those which dealt with the use of the Internet-based technologies in education, have revealed that various types of

Internet resources have been widely integrated into instructional settings, including language teaching environments.

The first attempts to integrate the Internet into educational settings involved asynchronous web tools, or Web 1.0 tools, which include such platforms as websites and email newsletters (Camilleri, Ford, Leja, & Sollars, 2006). However, the use of Web 1.0 tools in language education has begun to decline, since these allow for only one-way communication; furthermore, they do not provide an authentic communicative atmosphere. Peer-to-peer learning is not supported, and there is little real communication between the learner and the teacher. Therefore, these first-generation web tools are considered behavioristic, since learners are not active participants in the learning process; as a result, they are mainly used for giving instructions to students. However, with the emergence of synchronous Web 2.0 tools such as messengers, RSS and Wikis, two-way communication has been enabled. Learners have become active participants in the learning process, and student-student and student-teacher interaction is possible. Learners have begun to discover and access a wide range of information sources, and they can receive direct feedback and interact directly with their peers and their teacher. As a result, the teacher's role has also changed. Teachers no longer direct learning, but facilitate it, as well as encouraging peer-to-peer learning. Another recent development in second generation web tools consists of web logs, or blogs, which can be simply defined as amateur web pages on which material can be arranged chronologically. Most blogs are written in a personal or journalistic style; however, they have been increasingly used for educational purposes. As Jones (2002) notes, they are well-suited for use as online personal journals and electronic portfolios. Godwin-Jones (2003) further argues that blogs provide a collaborative environment, and thus, they have recently gained considerable popularity in education; through the use of blogs, learners can communicate with peers and other individuals, recording their feelings and thoughts and receiving comments in return.

The presence of technology, especially Internet-based technology, in the foreign language classroom is welcomed by the many scholars and teachers who are active users of these tools; a review of the available literature reveals that blogs are commonly used in language teaching and have been employed in teaching virtually all of the language skill areas. For instance, numerous researchers (Loving, Schroeder, Kang, Shimek, & Herbert, 2007; Moundridou & Gouloti, 2010; Northcott, Miliszewska & Dakich, 2007; Ramos, 2004) assert that blogs can be readily applied in language teaching, while researchers such as Duffy and Bruns (2006), as well as Lim (2006), affirm that the ease of uploading videos and images on blogs encourages

their use in the foreign language classroom. Accordingly, blogs are often employed to enhance EFL instruction; in this respect, Bruns and Jacobs (2006), Ferdig and Trammell (2004), and O'Donnell (2006) have all noted the utility of weblogs in improving learners' writing skills. This is considered to be particularly important in the sense that writing facilitates learning, since writing in the target language helps learners to acquire grammatical structures, idioms, and vocabulary, thus reinforcing the lectures given by the teacher. As Raimes (1983) asserts, once learners start to draft their ideas, grammatical accuracy, organization and the rest will follow. In his view, the process of writing causes learners to become more involved with the language as they work to produce an original text. In doing so, they are more likely to attempt to use unfamiliar structures and terms as they strive to transfer their ideas to paper, a process which is held to promote permanent learning. Likewise, when writing in computer or technology enhanced environments, students become active participants of the learning process, as they are encouraged to be explorers and creators of language (Arikan & Khezerlou, 2010).

In order to improve learners' writing skills, various approaches have been implemented, including product writing, process writing, free writing, communicative writing and grammar-syntax-organization. Although the objective of all of these approaches is the ability to write effectively, each approach has its own way to enhance learners' writing skills. In the free writing approach, quantity is more important than quality; numerous writing assignments are carried out with minimum corrections, since the aim is to encourage learners to write, and fluency is the goal. On the contrary, in the grammar-syntax-organization approach, learners are required to focus on the organization, grammar and syntax of their writing, laying out a chronological plan and sequence of words in addition to the required vocabulary. For communicative writing, an audience is necessary; therefore, students are encouraged to interact with their classmates, rather than with the teacher alone. In this context, learners not only read their peers' writings, but also respond to them, thus creating a communicative atmosphere. However, with the product writing approach, learners have less of an opportunity to discover a range of language uses, as accuracy is of greatest importance; thus, it is felt that learners' motivation may be compromised (Harwood, 2005). On the other hand, the process approach to writing prompts learners to set out on their writing assignments by asking questions of themselves, such as how to begin and how to organize their ideas. Although there are variations, most process writing techniques are characterized by the basic procedures of prewriting, peer and teacher feedback, and revision (Ferris & Hedgcock, 2005). First, there is a brainstorming phase; and then students show their drafts to their peers and finally to their

teachers. They then continue to organize their writing through reading each other's drafts. As Gabrielatos (2002) points out, writing skills, which often do not develop at the same rate of language input in foreign language instruction, should be taught in separate courses. Learners should be guided throughout the entire process of drafting, receiving feedback, revising and publishing. Thus, it can be argued that, in this approach, teachers should provide adequate time to their students; they should not limit them, and they should provide comprehensive feedback on students' drafts.

At the Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages, a primarily process-oriented package was used for teaching writing skills in the academic year 2010-2011. The aim of the package, which was prepared by the program development unit of the school, was to provide students with motivation for writing. However, based on the researcher's own experiences and other instructors' complaints about the issue, it can be claimed that the allotted time was not usually sufficient, and peer collaboration was not always provided during class time. Therefore, an additional motivating element or tool was found to be necessary. Accordingly, blogs, which are believed to motivate learners and engage them in writing outside of class time, were chosen as a means to support learners in the development of their writing skills.

The incorporation of Web 2.0 tools such as student blogs into the writing instruction process is believed to provide appropriate conditions for idea generation, peer collaboration and research. By means of such tools, teachers become active facilitators of learning, as students make use of the Internet and the resources it provides for to develop their language skills through the sharing of ideas. Boas (2011) supports the use of the Internet in terms of its role in encouraging learners to use English for their online tasks; furthermore, blogs, which can be implemented free of charge, constitute a creative means for the collaboration and the improvement of writing skills. Blogs are also believed to promote peer learning, as students typically read and comment on each other's written products.

Because peer learning is generally considered to have a positive effect on learning, various studies have been conducted in order to examine its effects on student achievement. For instance, Brandt (2008); Chen, Liu, Shih, Wu, and Yuan (2011); Dippold (2009); Lou, Wu, Shih, and Tseng (2010); Storch, (2005); and Tan, Ladyshevsky, and Gardner (2010), have all studied the effects of peer feedback through blogging on the development of writing skills. Through the use of blogs in writing instruction, it was demonstrated that learners benefit from reflective learning in giving and receiving feedback from their peers; in addition, this process inspired them to write more. As a result of these studies, the researchers generally found that

using blogs as a means of computer-mediated feedback is helpful and has a positive effect on learner outcomes; in addition, giving peer feedback online eases editing. Learners also generally indicated that they enjoyed the process, and furthermore, instructor feedback was also viewed as important to the development of writing. Blogs were also revealed by Farmer, Yue, and Brooks (2008) and Pinkman, (2005) as authentic, interesting and communicative resources. Their studies aimed to improve learners' independence through the use of blogs; data were collected through questionnaires and interviews. According to the results, learners' interest and motivation was increased. Additionally, the effects of blog-mediated peer and teacher feedback on learners' writing skills have been investigated (Miyazoe & Anderson, 2009; Wu, 2006), while researchers such as Blackstone, Spiri, and Naganuma (2007) aimed to improve learners writing skills through written communication via a blogging buddy system. Ellison and Wu (2008), Fageeh (2011), Kuzu (2007), and Özkan (2011) investigated this issue from a different point of view, looking at learners' attitudes toward the use of blogs; in general, they indicated that students responded positively to the use of blog pages in their writing courses. Through their experimental and descriptive research, they found that learners see blogs as an opportunity and provide freedom for self-expression in English.

Although there are various studies concerning the use of blogs in terms of peer and teacher feedback, as well as students' attitudes toward the teaching of language skills, these issues have been explored separately. However, blogs are specifically used as a component of writing courses in various language teaching settings. Thus, the present study aimed to provide a blog-enhanced writing course for a preparatory English program at Akdeniz University and to evaluate its effectiveness in terms of its contribution to the learners' writing skills, as well as to their attitudes toward writing. This study is the first to be conducted in the context of the Akdeniz University English language preparatory program with respect to technology-enhanced learning through the use of blogs and the Internet.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In preparatory English language education at Turkish universities, students generally receive 20-24 hours of language instruction per week, according to their proficiency level, in line with legislation enacted by the Council of Higher Education (CoHE), which dictates that language instruction in preparatory programs cannot comprise fewer than 20 hours per week. The general purpose of English preparatory education at Akdeniz University is to teach all language skills and language areas and to help students to develop their English language proficiency in accordance with their departmental requirements. These needs are also stated in

the Akdeniz University legislation for foreign language education, which requires A2 proficiency for associate's degree programs and B1-level proficiency for degree programs. These levels are determined by the Council of Europe (CoE), and the descriptors for these levels are determined by the Association of Language Testers (ALTE). As noted in Harmer (2001), an A1 level learner can complete basic forms and write notes such as times, dates and places. In addition to these skills, a learner at the A2 level can complete forms and write short, simple letters or podcasts related to personal information, while a B1 level learner can also write letters or make notes on familiar or predictable matters. Similarly, A1 level learners are classified between false beginner and elementary proficiency; A2 level learners are between elementary and pre-intermediate proficiency; and B1 level learners are between pre-intermediate and intermediate proficiency. In consideration of the levels that the learners were expected to complete by the end of the academic year, six hours of reading and six hours of writing courses were administered weekly, in addition to the mainstream courses in which listening, reading, speaking and writing were taught during the academic year 2010-2011.

In light of the legislation enacted by the CoHE, and when the foreign language curricula of Turkish university preparatory programs are investigated, some common tendencies can be seen. For instance, skills such as listening, reading and language use exercises are supported by interactive CDs or web pages which generally accompany the course books. Speaking skills are also addressed through the classroom teachers' adaptation of the exercises found in the course books. The teaching texts also provide writing exercises, but these exercises are not always authentic; learners often find them boring, since many of them do not even enjoy writing in their native language. Quintero (2008) supports this perspective, noting that "writing is a very complex area that causes problems for the majority of students in both the native and the foreign language" (p. 8). Furthermore, most writing activities found in the course books are designed to cover a particular grammatical topic presented in the unit, with the effect of inhibiting the communicative aspect of writing, in spite of a consensus that writing courses should be accompanied by extensive and authentic tasks which can be organized by instructors and carried out by students as out-of-class activities. However, due to concerns such as course schedules, teachers' workloads, and the lack of sufficient course hours in preparatory programs, it may be difficult to provide authentic materials and out-of-class activities for language learners.

In conjunction with these issues, the researcher has observed additional problems related to writing courses, including lack of interaction between teachers and students, as well as among

the students themselves; limited class time for peer collaboration; and the inability to create an authentic language learning environment. Considering the obstacles faced by learners in this context, it can be claimed that writing in the target language is not experienced by learners as part of their daily lives, although they use writing for routine mother-tongue activities such as sending SMSs and emails, chatting online and using social networking sites. In light of this, the researcher decided to integrate a similar technology into the teaching setting. The underlying reason for integrating technology into writing courses lies in the necessity for teachers to motivate learners to write by providing them with authentic materials. As has been proposed by various researchers (Loving et al., 2007; Moundridou & Gouloti, 2010; Northcott, Miliszewska, & Dakich, 2007; Ramos, 2004), blogs can be used as a vehicle for learners to improve their writing skills, providing them not only with an authentic writing context, but also enabling peer collaboration. Moreover, blogs create a real audience, since they are open to anyone. In this sense, blog pages can be considered as up-to-date and popular resources for effective writing instruction.

Because using blogs as an out-of-class activity is believed to provide a positive contribution in writing courses (Chen, Liu, Shih, Wu, and Yuan, 2011; Dippold, 2009), the present study intends to examine the benefits of blog pages on the success of learners' writing skills, as well as investigating students' attitudes towards the use of the Internet and blogs in language learning.

1.3. AIM OF THE STUDY

Rapid developments in technology have reshaped all aspects of life. Technological tools have been put to use in order to facilitate instruction in numerous academic fields; the use of technology in foreign language education in Turkey, as well as worldwide, is increasing day by day. Recent studies (Chiu, Liou, & Yeh, 2007; Kasapoğlu-Akyol, 2010; Wang, 2009) show that technology, which has primarily been used to address listening and speaking skills, can also be used effectively for other language areas such as writing. The reason behind the attempts to integrate technology into the teaching of writing skills lies in the need to provide more authentic, realistic and out-of-class environments for learners. However, providing an authentic environment for learners to practice their writing may not always be easy for the teacher. Since the receiver in student writing is usually the teacher, learners are not always comfortable using their knowledge. Brown (2001) notes that in most cases, the instructor is the only reader of learners' written work such as short writing exercises, short answer essays, and any other writing carried out in testing situations; therefore, instructors comprise the only

audience for their students' performance. In consideration of this issue, educators are in the search for new, enjoyable and functional ways of teaching writing in order to make learning relevant (Pankuch, 1998). Although there are numerous studies dealing with the use of Internet-based technologies in the context of language teaching, most of these studies solely inquire into the participants' opinions on the use of Internet-based technologies in language instruction. Few studies have examined the effects of these technology-based implementations. Thus, the present study intends to provide a weblog-enhanced writing course for students in the English preparatory program at Akdeniz University and to examine its effects on the success or improvement of these students with respect to their writing skills.

With this in mind, the overall aim of this study is to contribute to the field and to find answers to the following questions.

1.4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Regarding the above-mentioned aim, the present study seeks answers to the following research questions:

- 1) Does the use of blogs in preparatory school writing courses enhance the writing performance of students?
- 2) What are the students' views toward to the use of blogs in their writing course at preparatory school?

1.5. LIMITATIONS

One of the limitations of the study concerns the number of students involved. Thirty students, or approximately 10% of the total number of A2 level students at the school, participated in the study. A larger number of participants may provide better results.

Another limitation of the study concerns the time frame of the project, which was carried out for six weeks, or approximately 20% of the academic year. Applying the study over a semester or a full year might yield better results.

1.6. THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study is the first to be applied in terms of teaching writing through technology, namely, blog use, at the Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages. The available literature revealed that there are various studies dealing with the role of blogs in writing courses, students' attitudes towards blogs in writing courses, and the effects of using blogs on students' success. However, unlike the research found in the current literature, the present study attempts to cover the effects of using blogs and the Internet to improve learners' writing skills both from the standpoint of learners' success rates and their attitudes toward the use of these technologies. Therefore, this study may constitute an alternative and effective model for teaching writing to the learners of English as a foreign language in Turkey.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Writing is a vital aspect of communication between people; it is also an important element of foreign language teaching. However, like the teaching of other language skills such as speaking, reading and listening, the teaching of writing presents certain difficulties. For example, due to the productive nature of writing, students need a real communicative atmosphere and plenty of time in the classroom setting. As it is known, developing learners' writing skills requires a greater expenditure of time when compared to the teaching of other language skills. Several studies (Huwari & Aziz, 2011; Kurk and Atay, 2007; Latif, 2007; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1989) have indicated that writing lessons are also perceived as difficult and boring, since the audience for students' papers is primarily the teacher. Thus, learners generally do not receive a response to their writing, aside from teacher feedback. As a result, writing is not used as a communicative exercise, causing discomfort for learners (Abu Shawish & Atea, 2010). This lack of sharing of ideas with peers and their teachers results in a mechanical learning atmosphere which is not conducive to effective social learning. Although Harrington, Kopp and Schimmel (2003) contend that every student is a universe, that every learner is unique, and that every learner shapes his own learning and knowledge according to his experiences, when it comes to writing courses, students depend mainly on their teachers' direction. Additionally, Piaget (1953) noted that humans cannot be given information and be expected to understand and use it directly; instead, they must construct their own knowledge according to their previous experiences. Thus, educators are in search of new techniques or tools to motivate learners to learn and to connect their social lives with their learning.

In this respect, the interactive technologies and tools provided by the Internet have become widespread and have taken their place in the classroom. Today, most people in the world use the Internet for communication purposes. As Lancien (1998) points out, unlike earlier technologies, the Internet provides a means for interaction between human and machine (as cited in Kartal & Arikan, 2010, p. 93). In addition, the Internet has been used to create a communicative atmosphere in order to improve foreign language learners' skills such as reading, writing, and even listening. As Jonassen (2000) explains, with the emergence of blogs, learners have been encouraged to write, since the audience is more authentic; this motivates learners to spend more time working to improve their writing skills. In addition,

receiving comments on their written posts motivates learners, thus establishing peer collaboration and the promotion of constructivist principles.

In this chapter, the constructivist theory, which is the theoretical basis for the use of blogs in teaching, as well as social constructivism, will be briefly discussed. Afterward, the nature and the educational purposes of blogs will be reviewed, and the application of blog use in the context of language teaching will be described in detail. In this regard, the role of blogs in improving learners' writing skills, their contributions to learner success, and students' attitudes towards the use of blogs will be examined. In the next part of the chapter, the importance of developing writing skills and approaches to teaching writing skills will be reviewed. In the final section of the chapter, studies related to the use of blogs in the EFL context, particularly in the teaching of writing, will be examined.

2.2. THE THEORETICAL BASIS FOR THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

Developments in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) have compelled educators to integrate these resources into the teaching and learning environment. Various attempts have been made to integrate these technologies into classroom teaching. The first attempts were mainly grounded in behaviourism, which sees learning as the formation of habit through repetitive drills or imitation. As Skinner (1957) stated in his study, "language is not a mental concept; instead it is a behaviour," and added that "a child learns it by imitating" (as cited in Littlewood, 1984, p. 5). However, in the initial application of digital technologies, no authentic communication took place; only one-way communication was provided, as artificial communicative activities were carried out between a person and a machine in a virtual environment in the form of practice activities. As Liaw (1998) explained, "When computers were introduced into the classroom, computer software was seen as a means of reinforcing tedious practice of language forms" (p. 336). Yet, as with every aspect of education, behaviorism gave way to new teaching approaches which were intended to encourage communication and peer collaboration, leading to the construction of knowledge by drawing on learners' previous knowledge while engaging them in social settings. Accordingly, with the emergence of constructivism, and of social constructivist principles in particular, the application of ICT in the field of education has been reshaped in order to combine the social lives and prior experiences of students with their classroom learning. As a result, through the negotiation of classroom instruction and social life, learning occurs in the classroom setting (Rowell & Palmer, 2007; Demirci, 2009). Furthermore, social

constructivism suggests that learning should not be based solely on classroom teaching; rather, it should be supported through out-of-class activities related to the learners' social lives. In the following section, the theoretical principles of both constructivism in general and social constructivism in particular will be discussed in terms of the use of technology in teaching.

2.2.1. Constructivism

Although the roots of constructivism are not new, its principles have more recently become popular in the teaching of foreign languages. Constructivism is a philosophical concept that tries to explain how we construct knowledge: namely, how we understand the world and the things in it and how we put them into our thinking process (Anderson & Kanuka, 1999). Vygotsky (1978) argued that learning occurs through social interaction, putting forth theories of learning such as the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and inner speech, which are described in more detail in the following section (as cited in Powell & Kalina, 2009, p 247). In contrast, Piaget claimed that learning is constructed by individuals, and the social environment does not affect this process. To illustrate this theory, Piaget (1953) puts forth a schema theory which organizes the placing of new knowledge. In his view, new knowledge is passes through three stages: assimilation, accommodation and equilibration (as cited in Powell & Kalina, 2009, p. 241). According to Piaget's (1953) theory, when new knowledge is added (or assimilated) through mental operations, equilibration occurs; this information is accommodated into the existing schemata in the accommodation phase. Lastly, the following assimilation and accommodation, equilibration occurs. However, when new knowledge does not fit, disequilibrium occurs (as cited in Simatwa, 2010, p.366). Another important philosopher who supported constructivist theory was Bruner, whose studies were affected by both Vygotsky and Piaget. Bruner also put forward his own theory of learning, arguing that there are three modes for learning, including enactive, iconic and symbolic (Williams, 2004). As Overbaugh (2004) explains, firstly, the enactive stage entails the early stage of learning, which can be described as the motor stage. Secondly, in the iconic stage, knowledge is converted to visual images. Thirdly, in the symbolic stage, this information turns into arbitrary words, mathematical, or other symbols mentally. Furthermore, Brooks and Brooks (1993) assert that constructivism defines knowledge as temporary, developmental, and socially and culturally mediated, and is thus non-objective. Lebow (1993), on the other hand, contends that knowledge must be constructed within the cognitive structure of every individual, so that it is fundamentally personal, while at the same time being dependent on

experiences in the learning environment and on social interactions. In essence, the aim of constructivism is to make learning a part of life; thus, the target is learning, not teaching. According to constructivist theory, language cannot be taught directly, since the understanding of each learner is different. Learners see the world from their perspectives, just as they understand and associate their knowledge from their own perspectives. As Woolfolk (1993) points out, “the key idea is that students actively construct their own knowledge: the mind of the student mediates input from the outside world to determine what the student will learn. Learning is active mental work, not passive reception of teaching” (p 485).

In this respect, knowledge is flexible and is constructed by adding new experience to existing data (Overbaugh, 2004). In other words, knowledge is not an object which is transferred from one to another; rather, it is a phenomenon reconstructed by every individual (Atıcı, 2009). Therefore, instructors should consider the experiences that learners bring into the classroom (Rowell & Palmer, 2007), as well as the understanding that interaction also has an impact on learning.

In general, constructivism is used as a clarifying framework of learning that describes how the learner constructs knowledge by means of his or her experience. According to the constructivist view, learning occurs either through focusing on the individual cognitive construction of mental structures, a theory known as cognitive constructivism; or through emphasizing the impact of social interaction and cultural practice on the construction of knowledge, a process known as sociocultural constructivism.

2.2.1.1. Social Constructivism

Social constructivism, also known as co-constructivism, has its roots in the learning theory of Vygotsky. Like Piaget, Vygotsky believed that knowledge is constructed. However, unlike Piaget, Vygotsky puts the emphasis on social interaction. According to his theory, learning is a progressive movement from the current knowledge level to a higher level. This movement occurs in the Zone of Proximal Development as a result of social interaction; that is, interaction with peers is an effective means for developing skills and strategies, and therefore, more advanced peers can help less advanced members operate within their ZPD (Saba, 2011). For instance, when teachers use cooperative learning exercises, less-competent learners develop their language abilities with help of more advanced peers within the ZPD, which is defined as the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem

solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (Vygotsky, 1978, as cited in Powell & Kalina, 2009, p. 244). As Vygotsky described in his book, *“Thought and Language,”* what a child learns is her actual learning level, and today’s Zone of Proximal Development will be her actual developmental level of tomorrow.

Thus, learning is viewed as occurring through social interaction, either under the guidance of an adult or through cooperation with a peer who is more capable; this “more knowledgeable other” is an individual who has a better understanding or a higher ability level than the learner with respect to a particular task, process, or concept. Moreover, inner speech theory, another of Vygotsky’s constructs, contributes to learning by activating metacognition, or thinking about one’s own thinking, denoting awareness, knowledge and control of cognition (Meyer, Abrami, Wade, Aslan, & Deault, 2010). Metacognition has two aspects. The first of these is reflection, which entails thinking about what one knows. The second is self-regulation, which refers to the “thoughts, feelings and actions that are planned and adapted to the attainment of personal goals” (Zimmerman, 2000, as cited in Zimmerman, 2001, p. 65). Furthermore, Meyer et al. (2010) claim that metacognitive self-regulation has three processes: planning, monitoring and regulating. Through these processes, language develops as a result of social interactions to be used for communication purposes, later becoming internalized as thought and “inner speech.” Thus, thought is the result of language, and inner speech is a kind of self-talk which directs learners’ cognitive development and provides deeper understanding. According to Vygotsky, a child solves problems through inner speech, which guides the learner through the learning process. Therefore, it follows that writing is also a product of inner speech and self-regulation.

Another concept which relates to social constructivism is scaffolding, which is grounded in Vygotsky's (1978) notion of an expert assisting a novice or an apprentice in the construction of new knowledge. That is, the learning in the ZPD occurs in part through the scaffolding of social interaction between a younger learner and an older or more experienced adult. As Verenikina (1998) stated scaffolding is the guidance and support provided by the teacher during knowledge acquisition; this might entail a new role for the classroom teacher in a constructivist learning environment, as the instructor is called on to guide rather than to control the learning process. Scaffolding also supports the negotiation of meaning, as well as the structuring of knowledge through social interaction while studying with a peer or under the guidance of an adult. Moreover, it is also an important element of cooperative learning, which supports the effectiveness of group and peer work. In social constructivism, meaningful

learning occurs through social activities and interactions, such as creating written texts or making dialogues with peers. According to Vygotsky, instead of instruction in a formal school atmosphere, social interaction between teachers and learners, or among peers, is the key to children's acquisition of knowledge and self-regulatory skills (Camperell, 1982). This idea was also supported in many studies which aimed to determine the effects of scaffolding on the development of skills such as reading and writing. For instance, Sababi and Rababah (2012) aimed to improve reading comprehension skills through scaffolding; as a result of their research, they found that teaching through scaffolding improves learners' reading comprehension skills when compared to those of learners who were taught through traditional methods. Similarly, Huggins and Edwards (2011) examined the effects of scaffolding on learners' reading comprehension and writing skills through the use of tools such as graphic organizers; they found that scaffolding helped learners to improve their reading and writing skills.

It can be seen that, as the definitions of constructivism and social constructivism suggest, knowledge cannot be transferred solely by teacher talk in the classroom. According to the constructivist philosophy, knowledge should be constructed by individuals as they integrate their experiences from their social interactions with the learning process in the context of formal education. Moreover, social constructivism views each learner as a unique, complex and multidimensional individual whose background and needs are different from others. In a constructivist learning environment, learners are encouraged to use their existing knowledge as well as searching for new information. In this process, technology may activate learners' existing knowledge to construct new knowledge (Solomon & Schrum, 2007; Zhang & Olfman, 2010). Greany (2002) adds that in technology-enhanced educational settings, knowledge is constructed through interaction, interpretation and collaboration, and the teacher no longer instructs, but attends to communication and scaffolds the learners with their own experiences (Kern, 1996). Likewise, Bauersfeld (1995) asserts that instructors should adopt the role of facilitators, rather than teachers, guiding the peer learning process as learners socially construct new knowledge. Therefore, blending technology and constructivism to provide a social learning environment may be an effective alternative for teaching language, particularly as learning a second or a foreign language is often regarded as both a long and sometimes a monotonous process by learners (Bärenfänger, 2005). Tam (2000) similarly argues that constructivism is supported by a technology-enhanced learning environment; therefore, in order to improve learners' productive skills such as writing, which Cuenca and Carmona (1986) contend is often considered by learners to be boring and a difficult skill to

develop, technological tools such as discussion forums, email groups and blogs are regarded as an effective supplement by scholars, as well as classroom teachers.

2.3. TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS IN EDUCATION

When we look at educational technology from a historical perspective, chalk boards, VCRs, photocopy machines, and overhead projectors were all new and futuristic technological devices when they were first used in the classroom. Furthermore, after the invention of computers, PowerPoint has taken its place in the field of education (Enonbun, 2010). Its visual nature serves to create pictures in learners' minds; thus, learners are supported in ordering their opinions, both for oral and written communication. Similarly, videos constitute both visual and aural materials which direct learners to think critically about the topic of instruction. As videos help learners to visualize concepts, they provide an effective tool in brainstorming ideas and fostering creativity; therefore, watching videos on a particular topic can encourage learners to think broadly.

When Web 2.0 technologies such as blogs, Wikis, podcasts, social networks, and virtual worlds first became popular in the late 1990s, they were incorporated into educational programs (Enonbun, 2010). Due to the familiarity of these technologies to learners, such tools were useful in facilitating the application of social constructivist pedagogy (Zhang & Olfman, 2010). There are various applications for technology in the language classroom. As Arikan (2010) explains, computers are used for various Internet applications in language instruction; these not only pertain to daily use such as hypermedia links, online newspapers, magazines, radio and TV channels, and chat-rooms, but also for educational materials such as dictionaries and encyclopaedias, pronunciation tutors, grammar and vocabulary practice, games and literary extracts (Wilkenson & Sherman, 1996). Using technology in the teaching environment has numerous advantages, since such tendencies will surely exist in the future; as Fitzpatrick (2004) notes, "undoubtedly web-based learning continues to provide one of the chief sources for language learning" (p.13). Another advantage of using technology in language instruction is the lack of time constraints (Diakite, 2004); furthermore, Beauvois (1994, 1998) and Warschauer (1996) note that in addition to the countless resources provided by the Internet, a technology-enhanced learning environment increases motivation for language use. Panigua (1999) and Zurn (2005) support this belief, arguing that learners are often more interested in using technology and technological devices than in traditional learning tools.

As the Internet has become more widespread and accessible for individuals around the world, it is increasingly thought of as a significant and unlimited resource for teachers. For instance, English language teachers have utilized Internet applications for communicative purposes; instead of pen-friends, learners often correspond with native speakers through email or messaging services. Therefore, Web-based learning materials offer something more than non-communicative classroom tools (such as CDs) in terms of communication and interaction (Fitzpatrick, 2004).

In addition to email and messaging, mail groups offer another type of Internet-based technology that is popularly used in teaching environments. Mail groups allow for all members of a group to receive the same message, facilitating the development of a discussion on a given topic. As such, they are a useful means for written communication among learners outside of class time. Instructions can be sent through mail groups, while assignments can be collected via email replies; messages can then be archived chronologically. As Mak (1999) explains, mail groups have been used for class or group discussion, as learners send mails about the topics they are interested in, conduct research and discuss it with the target group (Mak, 1999). In addition, mail groups may provide an authentic communicative atmosphere when learners are encouraged to write emails to learners in other countries; as a result of real conversation and communication, learners may see their potential for writing in the target language.

A similar Web 2.0 tool used in foreign language education is online forums; these allow for online discussion or information-sharing, providing communication among learners and assisting in improving learners' reading and writing skills. Online forums offer a means for communication in which discussions are posted on a site which is accessible to all learners in a group, allowing them to read and respond to comments on a determined topic. Topics can be related to the unit of a book or to any other subjects (Dykman & Davis, 2008). While some of these forums, which are created by users to share information about any topic, are accessible to the public, others are only open to members. Forums are generally directed by a group of people in order to prevent misuse.

In addition, podcasts can be useful in teaching languages. These consist of audio and video materials which are updated regularly, as well as series which are added annually (as with television serials); teacher lectures from the Internet may also be accessed via podcast. Due to their accessibility, these files are portable, and learners can listen to them on their personal mp3 players or iPods. Podcasting differs from posting files on the Web (as with YouTube

videos) when the type of feed and the subscription model of the file is considered (Deal, 2007). Podcasts can be used by learners outside of class time, which engages learners more with their lessons (William & McMinn, 2008).

Social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter have also taken their places in the educational setting, serving as additional tools for learners to improve both their oral and written communication skills. This type of social site is very popular, and as Subrahmanyam, Kraut, Greenfield, and Gross (2000) note, many people, especially young adults and children, spend a great deal of their time in front of the computer using the Internet. Additionally, according to a survey conducted by English and Duncan-Howell (2008), most learners have an account either on Facebook or Twitter which they use to communicate with relatives and friends. By converting this technology into a tool for teaching English, teachers can take advantage of these platforms as a learning resource which is familiar and enjoyable for learners (Grosseck & Holotescu, 2008); thus, they can be effectively employed for in-class and out-of-class activities, helping to improve learners' writing skills. In employing social networks as learning tools, not only learners, but also teachers, are able to enjoy the education process. Learners are able to share their ideas, discuss learning topics with their peers, and communicate using the target language. Studies concerning the use of social sites also point to their effectiveness in permitting students to engage in informal learning without the time constraints imposed by the conventional classroom (Cain & Policastri, 2011).

To encourage learners to write, technology is used in various ways. Electronic portfolios (e-portfolios) are one of the recent popular techniques which engage learners in writing. As Hung (2012) reported in his study, e-portfolios serve as a collection of learners' progress, allowing students to track their achievements toward their learning goals (Hancock, 1994; O'Malley & Valdez-Pierce, 1996). When compared with paper based portfolios, e-portfolios allow for easy access, since there is no need to carry them. Today, e-portfolio based evaluations are thought to be a useful alternative for language assessment, serving not only to document learners' works, but also as a mirror to the development of competencies, experiences, and thinking, thus providing proof of progress and development (Ok & Erdoğan, 2008).

Another Web-based tool that can be used in a similar manner comprises blogs, which are created either by students or teachers. Unlike e-portfolios, these provide a more communicative and interactive platform that can be used in the context of teaching.

2.4. BLOGS (WEBLOGS) FOR TEACHING WRITING

Since 1999, blogs (or weblogs) have been used for educational purposes such as reading, writing and listening. Blogs consist of amateur web pages constructed through the guidance of templates; anyone who has an email address can create a personal blog. Blogs can include text-based content, videos, audio files, images and links to other pages. Goodwin-Jones (2003) described blogs as a web space for writing where all the writing and editing applications are done via a web browser and are made available to the public via the Internet. People around the world use blogs for personal, political, social and economic topics and commentaries; they are even used as diaries. These pages are popular due to their ease of creation, because they do not require a sophisticated knowledge of software or programming (Blood, 2000; Zhang, 2009).

Solomon and Schrum (2007) explain that blogs are primarily used for commentaries on topics that the blogger considers to be important. They are configured as professional web pages, offering features such as the ability to change the background; to post video, audio, and mp3 files; and to post and comment on the posts of other bloggers. Like other Web 2.0 tools, blogs are also used for communication. Moreover, since creating a blog is easy and free of charge, and considering learners' interest in digital technology, blogs have become increasingly popular. In February, 2011, the Nielsen Company, a leading global information and measurement company which provides market research, insights and data about what people watch and what consumers buy on a global and local basis, documented that there are over 156 million public blogs in existence. In the context of education, teachers have recognized their benefits; blogs have been used in language teaching since the 2000s due to their flexibility and ease of use, both for language teachers as well as learners (Loving et al, 2007; Moundridou & Gouloti, 2010; Northcott, Miliszewska & Dakich, 2007; Ramos, 2004). In particular, English language teachers have found blogs to be a useful instructional tool in terms of writing; as Richardson (2010) contends, blogs engage writers with ideas, questions and links. Moreover, they not only ask readers to think, but also to respond to blog posts; therefore, blogs encourage interaction and communication.

In the field of language education, blogs are seen as effective in helping learners to become motivated, involved and interested in the topics discussed; they can write and comment on any topic and express their ideas to a real audience, rather than to their instructors alone (Goodwin-Jones, 2003). In this respect, blogging is believed to promote learners' self-confidence. Furthermore, since blog topics typically involve real life, learners are prompted to

think critically; this helps them to become further involved in the discussions through writing posts and receiving feedback on their ideas. In this sense, William and Jacob (2004) argue that blogs are a transformational technology for teaching and learning. Accordingly, in considering the benefits and potentials of blogs for writing, teachers of English as a foreign language have implemented blogs for purposes such as creating a discussion outside the classroom. In this context, the teacher may put forward a topic, and learners discuss the topic on the class blog; some learners write their ideas on the topic, and others comment on it. These topics can be about their interests, hobbies or any other subjects relevant to the learners (Vurdien, 2011). Teachers may also guide their students to use blogs for creating their own writing portfolios, allowing others besides the instructor to see, read and provide feedback on their writing. This authentic communicative atmosphere makes writing more enjoyable for learner, since the blogger can interact with his/her posts via the comments of the followers (Benson & Reyman, 2009; Du & Wagner, 2007; Kavaliauskiene, Anusiene, & Mazeikiene, 2006; Noytim, 2010; Oravec, 2002; Ward, 2004).

Farrell (2003) and Downes (2006) outline five educational purposes of blogs. Firstly, blogs replace ordinary web pages, as instructors post information and the learners follow it. Secondly, instructors can use blogs as a link to other webpages that are relevant to the course. Thirdly, blogs can be used as a class discussion forum. Learners read the comments and post their own ideas about the topic, as well as following each other's comments; this communication helps them to get to know each other better. Fourthly, blogs can be used as a tool for organizing class seminars, which results in the individual blog turning into a group blog. Finally, blogs can be used for assignments such as portfolio writing or writing on topics that are of interest to learners.

Moreover, due to their asynchronous nature, blogs can be considered as a tool for cooperative learning, since they are accessible by anyone at any time. Bloggers' comments or discussions on a topic can help learners to share their ideas; this is even useful for learners in terms of their general knowledge of the world. Blogs can provide a source of information, since the details about a given topic can be found with the help of the learners' posts or by adding links to the blog. Blogs are used for a wide range of purposes in improving learners' skills, and therefore, various types of blogs are used in education.

2.4.1. Types of Blogs in EFL

Blogs can be used for various purposes in educational settings, since they provide opportunities for both teachers and learners. They are easy to create, free of charge, and motivational. Therefore, instructors of English and researchers in the field can easily use blogs as teaching materials and as spaces for sharing and learning. The educational uses of blogs in EFL settings outlined in the literature are discussed in the following section under four headings.

2.4.1.1. Blogs as Digital Portfolios

Blogs can be used as a space for learners to keep their portfolios in a more accessible format than that provided by paper-based portfolios. As Weller, Pegler, and Mason (2005) point out, blogs have emerged in the educational field as a means of communication, as a tool for collaboration, as a digital portfolio for learners, and also as a classroom portal where teachers can archive the writings of their students. It is also more interesting for learners to create their portfolios in the form of blogs, since they are able to share them with public, and the issue of writing for a real audience is thereby resolved. Furthermore, feedback from both peers and teachers is facilitated, since there is no time limitation on posting, unlike the restrictions imposed by scheduled class periods (Jones, 2006). Additionally, giving feedback online creates a more useful guide for the learner, as the feedback is always accessible, whereas giving feedback to every student within a restricted class period is not always effective.

2.4.1.2. Class Blogs

Class blogs which are set up by English Language teachers help learners to engage with the language outside of class time. Learners may access the blog at any time and post comments on topics that teachers provide on a daily or weekly basis. As Zhang and Olfman (2010) explain, class blogs are used not only for documenting and sharing learners' experiences, but also for providing feedback and assessment. It can be claimed that students' use of class blogs gives the teacher more information about the learners, not only in terms of their knowledge of the language, but also concerning their attitudes and thoughts. Through blogs, learners also find more time to communicate with their peers; this provides an opportunity for them to understand their peers and to get to know each other better.

2.4.1.3. Teacher Blogs

Teachers may also create blogs for their classes in order to give learners instructions about a lesson topic. The blog page may also serve as a guide for learners where the teacher posts information or links to useful sources. Learners then follow the blog in order to get the instructions and carry out their assignments. As Yang (2009) asserts, teachers can also ask questions of learners; furthermore, they can add videos, audio files, photos or texts in order to guide their students, and learners can model their teacher's blogs.

2.4.1.4. Learner Blogs

With learner blogs, each learner in a class may create his or her own blog page under the guidance of the teacher. Learners can use their blogs as a diary or portfolio page which is online and always accessible, allowing all students in the class to follow one another's blogs and post comments on the writings of their peers. Thus, blogging improves their written and oral communication through the help of the posts and comments on their writing by their peers and the class instructor. Efimova and Fiedler (2004) support learner blogs as providing for a cooperative learning environment in which learners are no longer alienated from their lessons, but can benefit from the feedback and validation of the community in developing their ideas. They also contend that blogs provide a means of expression for inner speech and reflective thinking; this material then becomes available for review and development, thus encouraging and amplifying the acquisition of the skills needed for self-observation and intentional change. Therefore, within the principles of social constructivism, writing, which can be regarded as the product of inner speech, has an opportunity to develop through collaboration and idea-sharing. In this respect, according to de Moor and Efimova (2004), in the process of blogging, learners have two different conversations; one with their inner ideas and one with the others in their community.

2.5. WRITING

When learning a foreign language, the aim is communication; written communication is often used either for academic and pedagogical purposes or for business. Accordingly, writing should not be considered as a secondary aspect of a syllabus, but as an equally-practiced skill during lessons, as writing is understood to be effective in helping learners to master the language. As Abidin, Pour-Mohammadi, and Hamid (2011) explain, when learners write, their brains, eyes and hands work together in order to express their thoughts; through this process, learners are free to think and write, as in a dream world.

Furthermore, in the course of writing, learners have the time to think and plan; unlike in speaking. They may consult grammar books, dictionaries or other materials which direct them to accurate use of the language (Harmer, 2004).

However, writing is also different and more difficult than other language skills. The first communicative skill which is developed in humans is listening, followed by speaking. Thus, all human beings grow up using speaking and listening in their first and sometimes their second or third languages; however, writing is generally taught after they have learned the speaking and listening skills (Harmer, 2004). Yet writing is an important skill to develop, and it is not easy to write, since it involves more than just putting speech into words. When learning a first language, learners are not taught systematic use of language, since the language is for communicating. Rather, systematic use of a language is taught only in the formal schooling process, and as a result, many learners find writing difficult, even in their first language, since it does not seem natural (Raimes, 1983). Another reason that learners find writing difficult is its formalized nature, as it is often used for academic purposes or for professional communication. Moreover, an authentic audience is often lacking in terms of teaching writing, since the addressee is usually the teacher (Hedge, 2005).

In order to help learners to write more effectively, various methods and approaches have been attempted. Among the well-known and widely used approaches, free-writing, communicative writing, grammar-syntax writing, and product and process writing have come into prominence. The aim of all of these writing approaches is similar. However, in some instances, mistakes are tolerated, as in communicative writing; while in others, such as grammar-syntax writing, errors are not acceptable. Grammar-syntax writing learners are expected to give attention to their writing in terms of grammar and syntax, as they are given linking words, such as “firstly,” “secondly” and “finally,” to organize their writing (Scott, 1996). However, in the communicative approach to writing, learners are expected to write for real communicative purposes, producing informal texts or letters. In this approach, the audience also gains importance, so interaction between learners should be provided. Free-writing, which encourages learners to write more fluently, has a similar aim; in this case, there is less correction in terms of grammatical errors, as it is believed that grammatical accuracy will develop naturally as learners formulate their ideas (Scott, 1996). On the contrary, in product writing, the roots of which are found in behavioristic theory, the emphasis is on the appropriate use of grammar, vocabulary and syntax; and writing is the product of linguistic knowledge. The process writing approach, on the other hand, aims to organize writing into phases. First, the learner is prompted to think about how to organize the writing by asking

questions of him or herself. The basic elements of process writing consist of prewriting, peer feedback, and teacher feedback and revision (Ferris & Hedgecock, 2005). The writing process starts with brainstorming; following this phase, learners begin the actual writing. After producing a draft, they receive feedback from their peers and teachers. Such social and constructivist based writing courses have demonstrated improvements in students' interest in English writing and performance. Furthermore, learners are able to develop their autonomous and cooperative learning, as well as their critical thinking levels, thereby enhancing their comprehension abilities (Fang, Kang, & Feng, 2009).

These writing strategies and approaches to teaching can also be supported by the use of technological tools such as the Internet, which provides conditions for idea generation, research and collaboration among learners. In technology-enhanced learning environments, the teachers' role is altered, as they become active facilitators of learning. The actual learning is carried out by the learners themselves as they work to construct new knowledge. Since the Internet is multilingual, the use of online resources may help learners to use English for their online tasks (Boas, 2011). Moreover, learners may find opportunities to interact with their peers outside of the classroom and share ideas with them, resulting in collaborative learning. Teachers also provide assistance and feedback outside the scheduled class period, and thus, learning the target language becomes part of life.

2.5.1. Peer Feedback

According to the learning theories of process and collaborative writing, using peer feedback has a great impact on students' learning (Hansen & Lui, 2004). Rather than relying on teachers' feedback alone, learners should be encouraged to give each other feedback, as this is believed to have a positive effect on both learners' individual development of the organization of their ideas as well as their communication with their peers. Getting feedback provides learners with the means to look at their own writing from a different perspective, and by giving and receiving feedback; they guide each other to more successful writing. In this respect, peer feedback should not be thought of only as correcting each other's mistakes, but also as an idea-sharing platform. Accordingly, using online resources such as blogs may be an effective means of providing peer feedback among learners.

2.5.2. Computer-Mediated Feedback

In addition to peer feedback, computer-mediated feedback may likewise have motivational benefits which help learners to become more engaged with their own learning. Furthermore, in an online context, the teacher is not the only audience or evaluator of the writing process. Internet feedback platforms such as blogs and discussion forums provide a more motivational and authentic atmosphere; according to DiGiovanni and Nagaswami (2001), learners find receiving feedback in the form of computer mediated communication to be beneficial.

2.5.3. Teacher Feedback

Teacher feedback generally provides the recipient with information about correctness, accuracy and appropriateness (Mottet, 2008). Prior to this phase, learners may share ideas with their peers, and then the teacher guides them to accurate and well-organized writing. The learners' drafts are then corrected, and any reorganization, if needed, is applied by the teacher. After receiving teacher feedback, the learners revise their drafts and submit a final version. As with online peer feedback, teacher feedback can also be provided through blogs, thus resulting in teacher-learner interaction outside the classroom environment.

2.6. RELATED STUDIES

The use of blogs for teaching language skills has become an important topic in foreign language education, and a number of studies have been conducted in the field. Blogs have primarily been used for improving learners' basic skills and creating an authentic atmosphere for the sharing of ideas and experiences. While lesson time is often restricted, blogs are a platform which allows learners to spend time with their peers beyond the scheduled class period and use the target language to improve their language skills; thus motivating their learning. Moreover, blogs allow learners to combine the real world and the learning process in terms of a social constructivist perspective, as blogs incorporate the idea of learning through social interaction. In this respect, the effects of using blogs have been investigated from the perspective of peer feedback, learner success and students' attitudes. In terms of general findings, it has been revealed that using blogs improves learners' success rates; peer feedback supports mutual learning; and learner attitudes toward blog use are mostly positive. In the following sections, the studies dealing with each of the above mentioned aspects will be presented in detail.

2.6.1. Blog Use and Peer Feedback

Blogging, unlike pen and paper writing, enables a large number of readers to give feedback or comment on the writing of others. Teachers of English and researchers in the field of teaching English as a second or a foreign language have seen this as an opportunity to provide collaborative and constructivist learning. Blogs support peer collaboration due to their features of providing an atmosphere for sharing and commenting. Yang and Chang (2012) examined the effects of using blogs in terms of peer feedback in their quasi-experimental study, which used a questionnaire to gather the participants' opinions. The opinions of two groups of Taiwanese students were examined to determine their attitudes towards peer interaction. Although both groups used blogs, one of the groups was assigned to comment on their peers' posts, whereas the other group was expected only to read peer postings without commenting on them. The findings suggest that interactive peer interaction through commenting on each other's posts was associated with more positive attitudes and improved academic achievement in the course.

Similarly, Vurdien (2011) conducted a study with eleven students who were studying for the Certificate in Advanced English (CAE) examination at a language school in Spain. In this study, learner blogs were created, and participants were asked to read and comment on each other's writing. According to findings, feedback from peers encouraged learners to express their opinions more clearly while being more careful about avoiding errors.

In a similar study, Chen, Liu, Shih, Wu, and Yuan (2011) studied the effects of peer feedback through the use of blogs on elementary students' success. The findings from their investigation of students' blog use, as well as learners' pre and post test results, revealed that using blogs for peer feedback was beneficial in improving writing through peer collaboration.

Feedback is regarded as one of the most important factors in improving not only writing skills, but also overall learning levels. Since social constructivism supports the idea of social interaction, peer feedback is an important factor in this process. In order to explore the effectiveness of Web-based Asynchronous Peer Feedback (WAPF) on enhancing writing proficiency among undergraduates, Abdullah (2011) carried out a study with 10 undergraduate students from three institutions who participated in a web-based process writing course for a period of two months. In this context, the learners engaged in three essay drafts (first, second and final drafts) and two online peer feedback phases via weblogs. It was found that the participants in this study were able to provide constructive WAPFs, which were

divided into three types: social, affective, and cognitive. The social and affective WAPFs acquired were essential to the support of learning. Cognitive WAPFs were necessary to provide “global feedback,” which is comprehensive in that it does not only focus on minor errors in grammar, but also on more crucial elements of writing such as content and rhetoric.

In a similar study, Wang (2009) also investigated blog-based electronic feedback (e-feedback) with respect to linguistic characteristics, accuracy levels, and revision rates with thirty undergraduate students from a university in northern Taiwan. The students participated in a blog project which required them to respond to essays written by others, as well as posting their own work on weblogs. The results of the study revealed that the participants put more emphasis on language than on content and organization of a writing product; furthermore, the accuracy of the comments did not impact revision. Thus, it was found that there is a need to equip EFL students with the ability to give accurate comments in weblog-mediated peer editing activities.

Taking a different perspective of blogs into account, certain researchers have aimed to determine the effects of peer feedback in terms of blogging buddy applications. For instance, Blackstone, Spiri, and Naganuma (2007) attempted to measure students’ attention to blogging and accompanying activities. In their study, they investigated eleven classes of 145 students from an English-medium university in Japan. The study was carried out over two semesters; during this time, they set up a blog for each class and assigned a “blogging buddy” for each student. At the end of each semester, they conducted a survey to examine students’ attitudes towards blogging and peer collaboration. The results of their study revealed that the majority of the students found the blogging activities and being paired with classmates to be positive and useful. They especially favored the blogging buddy system, which enabled them respond to one another’s writing before it was posted on the blog. In addition, the researchers reported that the blogs and associated activities motivated students to make meaningful use of English outside the classroom.

In similar study, Abidin, Mohammadi, and Hamid (2001) observed the effect of using blogs, not only on peer collaboration through peer feedback, but also on learners’ attitudes and motivation. The findings of their study suggest that peer collaboration is preferred by students when compared with help coming from the teacher; thus, group work which addresses writing is favored by students. Moreover, the results of their study showed that encouraging peer collaboration through blogs creates positive results, even with students of an average proficiency level.

2.6.2. Students' Attitudes towards Using Blogs

In addition to the use of blogs in providing feedback to improve learners' writing skills, learners attitudes towards using blogs is another popular topic which has been investigated by many scholars. Blogs, which are considered as having a positive effect on learner success, also affect learners' motivation. Numerous researchers have investigated learners' attitudes towards using blogs to improve their writing skills. Noytim (2010), for example, studied a population of twenty undergraduate English major students in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Nakhon Pathom Rajabhat University. The participants were enrolled in an academic reading and writing course; in addition to the traditional course design, they were asked to create and use blogs in order to reflect on the topics covered in the course. Prior to and following the application, they were given questionnaires in which they were asked to record their ideas about blog use. The researcher reported that students see blogs as a tool for self-expression and for the improvement of English, as they provide opportunities for both communication and practice.

In another study concerning the attitudes of learners toward blog use application, Moundridou and Goulioti (2010) suggest that blogs helps students to reflect and to publish their opinions; moreover, as they allow for peer comments on blog posts, they provide feedback and a platform for new ideas. For the purpose of their study, a digital space was created using the free-of-charge Windows Live Space service; the platform consisted of a blog and RSS feeds. The initial posts contained a description of the topic, and the discussion comprised questions intended to motivate students' posts. In their study with 75 secondary school students and their instructors, the researchers found that blogs attracted students' attention and encouraged them to participate in learning activities, both on the blogs and in the classroom. Additionally, the instructors' opinions concerning the use of blogs were examined following the application. According to the results, the instructors, as well as the learners, enjoyed using computer tools. In addition, the instructors stated that blogging was a favorable way of teaching writing, as it provides opportunities for students to actively take part in the learning process. However, the results also indicated that in order to make effective use of blogs, instructors should also participate actively in the process.

In another study applied in a university in Japan with 61 students, Miyazoe and Anderson (2010) used forums for topical discussions and created blogs for an optional free writing activity, as well as setting up Wikis in order to conduct a collaborative translation from English to Japanese. Through results of questionnaires and interviews, they found that the

students perceived these online writing tools to be useful, and they experienced positive development in their writing skills through their application.

Similarly, in a study concerning learners' motivation and perceptions towards blog use application, Tan (2008) interviewed 48 higher education students to develop a better understanding of their perceptions toward blog use. The aim of this study was to investigate the elements which prompted learners to blog and to explore their views of learning through blogging. As a result of the interviews, the researcher found that blogs have an effect on students' overall development helping them to build not only writing skills, but also their information technology and judgment skills, as well as enhancing their interpersonal relationships.

Likewise, Can and Özdemir (2006) investigated the use of blogs for process-oriented writing. Their study, which was primarily based on a review of related studies, covered both research and the theoretical foundation of using blogs for teaching writing. As a result of their review of the related studies, they concluded that blogs can offer an innovative approach to writing instruction which can be effective in higher education in the Turkish context. Moreover, the use of blogs can bring about solutions to the problems faced in higher education writing courses.

In addition, blogs are used as teaching tools and materials for distance education. In her review of the relevant literature, Lim (2006) describes blogs as a cooperative, dynamic, participatory and personalised form of learning; she suggests that blogs will have a vital role in teaching and learning in distance education. In addition, she states that through cooperation and innovation, blogs will encourage high-complexity thinking, integration and problem solving.

Learners' attitudes toward the use of blogs in terms of assessment have also been investigated. In order to develop an innovative evaluation tool in higher education, Lance (2006) explored the extent to which blogs are adopted and used for assessment by students at London Metropolitan University. In addition, he aimed to determine students' attitudes towards blogs within the teaching and learning context. As a result of his questionnaire, it was revealed that students reported the most important advantage of blogs as their capacity to allow learners to freely express themselves and to interact with others. Furthermore, the participants expressed that using blogs as a tool for assessment is challenging, motivating and innovative.

Similarly, Wu (2005) investigated the advantages of using blogs in EFL writing classes, conducting a study with students from two separate classes. In class A, the use of blogging was strongly encouraged, but not required; whereas the use of blogs was required in class B. A blog survey was conducted with both classes. The survey results showed that blogs were helpful in writing if students wrote frequently, if they took advantage of the Internet to get help in expressing their ideas accurately, and if they used online dictionaries to look up unfamiliar terms.

2.6.3. Blog Use and Student Success

When the available literature on the use of blogs in teaching English is reviewed, it can be seen that there are various studies dealing with the effects of using blogs on learner success. As blog use is believed to enhance learners' motivation and create positive learner attitudes, their success rates are positively affected overall, according to the related studies in the field. For example, Khampusaen (2012) investigated the results of a blogging project on the writing skills of university students. In this study, learners were supported with peer and teacher feedback; in this respect, the researcher reported that giving and receiving feedback improved learners' motivation; moreover, learners' attitudes were also positively affected by the blog use application. As a result, it was claimed that learners' writing skills, as well as their skills in technology use, were improved. Finally, blogging was found to be a productive and successful application for improving learners' writing skills.

In a similar study, Fageeh (2011) compared traditional writing instruction and blog-enhanced writing instruction on intermediate learners' writing skills. Fourth-year students in an English department were divided into two groups, with twenty-five in the experimental group and twenty-five in the control group. Blogs were used in the experimental group, whereas traditional methods of oral presentations and writing assignments were used in the control group. The researcher stated that using blogs improved intermediate learners' writing skills and proficiency greatly when compared to traditional writing instruction. Additionally, the results revealed that blogs may encourage students' assertiveness in writing in English, as they are easy to use and give learners a chance to reach a real audience.

Similarly, Hashemi and Najafi (2011) investigated the advantages of using weblogs in increasing the writing skills of college students in Iran. The students were divided into two groups; in one, the use of blogs was strongly encouraged but not required; whereas in the other, the use of blogs was required and counted as 20% of their final grade. A blog survey

was conducted with both classes at the end of the semester, and the results showed that all of the learners enjoyed the blog project.

Blog use application for writing courses has also become popular in Turkey, and similar studies have been conducted by various researchers. For example, in Özkan's (2011) study with pre-service English teachers, it was found that blogging had both positive and negative effects on learners' skills. In her investigation, she collected data through both interviews and comments on learners' blogs. According to her results, learners' writing skills, peer collaboration and technology use skills were improved. However, the learners reported problems with using blogs. For instance, 24% of the learners stated that technical problems, as well as monotonousness and abuse of the blogging exercise, were negative aspects of the blogging experience.

In another study conducted at a Turkish university, Arslan and Şahin-Kızıl (2010) studied a control group receiving in-class, process-oriented writing instruction, as well as an experimental group integrating blogs into their writing process through the use of blogging software. The researchers sought to answer whether the use of blog software as a supplementary tool for the writing process enhanced learners' writing performance. The findings revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group in specific areas of writing such as content and organization, which suggests that the use of blogs in writing classes enhances students' performance.

Similarly, Koçoğlu (2009) conducted a study with twenty-four participants from the ELT department of Yeditepe University. She found out that a group of students who used blogs in writing classes outperformed those who received traditional writing instruction. The data were collected through questionnaires and interviews; in light of her findings; the researcher expressed that one of the greatest advantages of using blogs was the ability of students to reach an audience other than the teacher. Her findings additionally revealed that blogs support the development of writing skills, and technology is a motivating tool for language learners when integrated into course programmes.

Using blogs for writing lessons not only improves learners' success rates, but has also been found to improve their critical thinking levels. In an international study, Zhang (2009) reviewed the effects of blog use on learners, including its effects on critical thinking. He found that using blogs in English writing had the following benefits: facilitating learners' critical thinking skills; providing examples for learners to model and to learn; affecting

learners' quality of writing; promoting meaningful learning; and giving learners a purpose for writing. Zhang also suggested some pointers for facilitating use of blogs in English writing. These include promoting comfortable interaction for learners, motivating learners' writing and interaction, and giving learners self-confidence. In addition, he claimed that blogs are primarily used as journals; they also effective tools in a range of pedagogical applications.

Various techniques have been employed to improve learners' writing skills through the use of blogs. In this respect, Quintero's (2008) study investigated the effects of using blogs on learners' writing skills, as well as on learner outcomes. In his investigation, a group of students from Colombia and another group from Canada interacted on three different blogs concerning personal interests, working and writing cooperatively, and debating by using argumentative writing. The results revealed that students developed their writing significantly through the use of these blogs, and the feedback that the students received through the online interactions was highly beneficial.

In order to explore the benefits of cooperative learning in weblog networks, focusing particularly on learning outcomes, Wang and Fang (2005) conducted a study in a one-semester rhetoric and writing course. After using weblogs for the writing course, a questionnaire was applied to inquire into the attitudes of the students. The results revealed that online communication promoted autonomous learning; furthermore, the students learned to manage their time, process information, and evaluate their own learning.

As mentioned previously, the related studies in the field have mainly investigated the effects of using blogs either in terms of learner success, attitudes of learners, or peer feedback. Most of the research has concluded that using technological tools such as blogs has a positive effect on learners' writing skills. However, few researchers in the field have investigated the effects of using technological tools in terms of learner success and attitudes in the same study. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the effects of using technological tools in terms of learner success and learner attitudes at the same time. Since there are few similar studies in the field, the present study was conducted to investigate whether applying a similar study in different work groups produces similar results.

As mentioned in this section, various researchers have studied blogs. For example, Vurdien (2011), Chen, et al. (2011), Abdullah (2011), Wang (2009), Blackstone, Spiri, and Naganuma (2007), Abidin, Mohammadi, and Hamid (2001) studied the effects of blog-based peer feedback on learners' writing skills. The results of these studies generally indicated that using

peer feedback has a positive effect on learners' writing skills. In a similar vein, Noytim (2010), Moundridou and Goulioti (2010), Miyazoe and Anderson (2010), Tam (2008), Can and Devrim (2006), Lim (2006), Lance (2006) and Wu (2005) investigated learners' attitudes towards using blogs; their findings indicated that learners have generally positive attitudes towards blog use in their coursework, and most of the participants in those studies believed that using blogs improved their writing skills. Khampusaen (2012), Fageeh (2011), Hashemi and Najafi (2011), Özkan (2011), Arslan and Şahin-Kızıl (2010), Koçoğlu (2009), Zhang (2009), Quintero (2008), and Wang and Fang (2005) investigated the effects of blogs on learner success, and their findings indicate that using blogs mostly improved learner outcomes in writing. However, these studies investigated the effects of using blogs from various perspectives and did not focus on the aspects of learner attitudes, learner success and the effects of peer feedback altogether. Therefore, the present study intends to investigate the effect of blogs and online feedback in terms of student success in addition to their attitudes towards using blogs in their writing courses.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

In this section, the research model, work groups, data gathering and application, as well as the analysis and commentary on the data, the duration of the study and the possibilities for future application are described in subsections.

3.1. RESEARCH METHOD

The methodology adopted for the present study is a quasi-experimental research design, which is a type of evaluation that aims to determine whether a program or intervention has the intended effect on a study's participants (NCTI, 2011). Since the most common form of a quasi-experimental study includes a pre-test and a post-test design with both an experimental group and a control group, the present study was conducted accordingly.

3.2. SETTINGS

This study took place in the Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages preparatory classes in Antalya, Turkey. The purpose of English preparatory classes is to help learners to communicate with the public and in academic environments in English. Most of the learners took the English lessons on a voluntary basis, although for some of the students, the course was compulsory.

Learners begin their preparatory class lessons by taking a placement test prepared by the higher school of foreign languages. The preparatory class students attend twenty-four hours of English lessons each week, which are divided into three parts: twelve hours for mainstream instruction; six hours for reading; and six hours for writing lessons. In mainstream lessons, learners are taught general English according to four skill exercises, which include listening, speaking, reading and writing, as well as grammar and vocabulary exercises. To improve learners' academic levels, an extra reading book and a writing pack were added to the program. For their reading lessons, the learners had an extra reading syllabus, along with an additional reading textbook. For their writing lessons, a ready-prepared package was used. This package consisted of grammar exercises, word formation exercises, linking word and conjunction exercises, and paragraph completion exercises. These exercises were completed prior to the writing phase for each topic.

This study was implemented in the context of the writing course, which aimed to improve learners' academic and organizational writing performance, although the topics that the learners studied were non-academic in nature.

Throughout the academic year, the learners had three terms. In the first term, they began their writing lessons by using linking words to connect two separate sentences; this exercise was followed by creating short paragraphs. In the paragraph phase, the students learned to make outlines in order to have a better understanding of paragraph organization and structure. Theoretical information was given to the students to create an outline, and the four-square technique was taught. This technique consists of filling in four squares; three of these contain supporting details, and the fourth contains a wrap-up sentence. Furthermore, the supporting detail squares have additional supporting details in themselves; these supporting squares and the wrap-up sentence are used to build the main idea of a paragraph.

In the second term, the learners began writing essays with the help of the four-square technique. In this term, the learners wrote both compare-and-contrast and definition essays. For each essay type, the learners participated in a preparation phase and a brainstorming phase. First, they filled in their four-squares and crosschecked their peers' four-squares; their final four-square shape was determined with the help of the writing teacher. After finishing the four-squares, the learners were asked to write the first drafts of their essays. The first drafts were checked by their peers, and the learners gave feedback to each other. After receiving the peer feedback, the learners wrote their second drafts; these were checked by their teacher. The teacher used symbols for correction and gave oral feedback concerning paragraph and essay organization. In the end, the learners wrote their final drafts and were told to add these to their dossier. This phase was the same for all writing topics.

In the third term, the learners wrote on two different topics, including a story and a cause-and-effect essay. The same process was followed as in the second term. Word formation, linking words and conjunctions, and paragraph completion exercises were conducted, and these exercises were followed by filling in four-squares. Finally, the learners wrote their essays according to what they had learned in the chapter. Their first drafts were crosschecked by their peers, the second drafts were checked by their writing teacher, and then their final drafts were written.

At the end of the academic year, the learners' drafts for each topic were checked by the class teacher and given back to the learners for safe-keeping.

3.3. PARTICIPANTS

The participants were 30 Turkish EFL learners from two classes in the Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages. The level of participants was determined according to the placement exam implemented by the Higher School of Foreign Languages at the beginning of the term. According to the placement exam, the learners in both the control and experimental groups were revealed to be at the A1 level. After 10 weeks of the first term, the learners were randomly placed into classes according to the grades they received on the Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages A1 completion examination, through which the learners were tested on their listening, language use, reading, speaking and writing skills. They were then ready to take their A2 level courses. Therefore, all of the learners were at the level of A2 with respect to the criteria of the *Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR, 2001)*; gender difference was not taken into account.

After the groups were determined, the learners were asked to write an essay, which was used as a pre-test for the study. The procedures and instruments used in the study are given in detail in the following section. At the beginning of the study, the learners were informed about the purpose of the investigation, and their permission was obtained via the questionnaire, allowing the researcher to use the data gathered during the study. The participants were assured that their written products and posts on their blog pages would be kept confidential and would only be used for academic purposes. Moreover, to ensure the learners' anonymity, their names and web addresses were hidden in the appendices.

3.4. DATA GATHERING INSTRUMENTS

To determine the level of the learners, two examinations were used; these were applied by the Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages. The first exam was the proficiency exam, which was applied to determine the level of all of the learners in the preparatory program. The second exam used to determine the level of the learners was the A1 Completion exam, which was applied at the end of the first 10-week term. Additional instruments used for data collection were learners' writing tasks, questionnaires, and pre-test and post-test scores. A detailed description of the data gathering instruments is given in the following section.

3.4.1. Proficiency Exam

This exam was conducted by the Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages at the beginning of the term to determine the levels of all of the learners in the program. Since there were more than 2000 participants, and the validity of the exam was an issue, multiple choice questions were used.

3.4.2. A1 Level Completion Exam

After the 10-week course, the A1 level completion exam was prepared by the testing and evaluation department, utilizing Key English Test KET examination sample tests. This exam type is used for basic level English language learners and evaluates learners' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

3.4.3. Pre-Test

The pre-test consisted of two essay questions and was applied after the first three weeks of the second term of English language education. Learners were given the basic procedures for writing essays before the pre-test. The pre-test was designed to determine whether there was a difference between the control and the experimental groups. The pre-test results were evaluated by two English language teachers giving writing lessons, in addition to the class teacher and a research assistant in the Department of English Language Teaching, in order to ensure reliability. According to the results, there was no statistically significant difference between the groups. The mean score of the control group was 40, and the mean score for the experimental group was 40.8. The scores of the control group ranged between 33 and 68, while the standard deviation was 8.99. Similarly, the scores of the experimental group fell between 33 and 62, and the standard deviation was 7.70.

3.4.4. The Internet Use Questionnaire

To collect data from the learners concerning their Internet use knowledge and frequencies, a questionnaire consisting of 14 items was applied to both the control and the experimental groups. The questionnaire was adapted and renewed by reviewing related studies in the field (Bashir, Mahmood, & Shafique, 2008; Malik & Mahmood, 2009; Sam, Othman, & Nordin, 2005). The participants were asked to answer items on a 5-point Likert type scale with options ranging from totally agree (1) to totally disagree (5). However, when analyzing the results, in order to see the positive and negative tendencies in general, the end-points were merged for the purposes of interpretation. Accordingly, the learners' responses to the items were analyzed,

and responses for “agree” and “totally agree” options were summed under one section as “agree;” likewise, the “disagree” and “totally disagree” responses were collected under one section as “disagree.” Through this questionnaire, the learners’ attitudes towards using the Internet and Internet pages; their knowledge about using the Internet, blog pages, and emails; and use of the Internet for doing homework was surveyed (see Appendix B). The analysis of the questionnaire is given in the table below. As the analysis of the questionnaire

for each group shows, there were no significant differences between groups in terms of their Internet use habits or their attitudes and knowledge about using blogs. Therefore, the analysis shows that the participants have similar attitudes towards using the Internet and blogs, and thus, no significant differences were found that would impact the results of the study.

The Analysis of the Internet Use Questionnaire for the Control Group

Questionnaire Items		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
		%	F	%	f	%	f
1	I found the Internet useful.	93.3	14	6.7	1	0	0
2	The Internet eases my life.	86.7	13	6.7	1	6.7	1
3	I log onto the Internet every day.	66.7	10	20.0	3	13.3	2
4	I do my homework by using the Internet.	46.7	7	33.3	5	20.0	3
5	I read comments on the Internet.	33.3	5	33.3	5	33.3	5
6	I write comments on the Internet.	33.3	5	20.0	3	46.7	7
7	I check my email account every day.	60.0	9	26.7	4	13.3	2
8	I like communicating through emails.	53.3	8	33.3	5	13.3	2
9	I send at least 1 email every day.	53.3	8	20.0	3	26.7	4
10	I know how to use blogs.	6.7	1	20.0	3	73.3	11
11	I find the information on blogs beneficial.	6.7	1	26.7	4	66.7	10
12	I follow blog pages.	0.0	0	20.0	3	80.0	12
13	I read comments on blog pages.	6.7	1	26.7	4	66.7	10
14	I write comments on blog pages.	6.7	1	6.7	1	86.7	13

The Analysis of the Internet Use Questionnaire for the Experimental Group

Questionnaire Items	Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
	f	%	f	%	f	%
1 I found the Internet useful.	13	86.7	2	13.3	0	0
2 The Internet eases my life.	13	86.6	1	6.7	1	6.7
3 I log onto the Internet every day.	8	53.3	5	33.3	2	13.3
4 I do my homework by using the Internet.	8	40.0	4	26.7	3	20.0
5 I read comments on the Internet.	6	46.7	5	33.3	4	26.7
6 I write comments on the Internet.	7	66.7	3	20.0	5	33.3
7 I check my email account every day.	10	46.7	3	20.0	2	13.3
8 I like communicating through emails.	7	46.7	5	33.3	3	20.0
9 I send at least 1 email every day.	7	6.7	4	6.7	4	26.7
10 I know how to use blogs.	1	13.3	3	20.0	11	73.3
11 I find the information on blogs beneficial.	2	13.3	4	26.7	9	60.0
12 I follow blog pages.	2	13.3	3	20.0	10	66.7
13 I read comments on blog pages.	2	13.3	4	26.7	9	60.0
14 I write comments on blog pages.	1	6.7	1	6.7	13	86.7

3.4.5. Teacher and Learner Blogs

To conduct the study, learners were introduced to www.blogger.com, which is the one of the most widely-used and popular blog pages and is available free of charge (Camilleri et al., 2010). Firstly, learners were taught

to create a personal blog page, which requires a Gmail account (see Appendix B). Secondly, a teacher blog, which had been set up in advance, was demonstrated to the experimental group (see Appendix C). Lastly, posting on the blog pages and commenting on a post was taught through practice.

The teacher blog was used by the learners for collecting data related to each topic, for writing their drafts for their own blogs, and for watching videos about the topics. A sample four-square was also posted on the teacher blog for each topic (see Appendix D). The learners

followed the teacher blog in order to post their new essays on their own blogs, and then, with the help of their peers and teacher, they posted their final drafts for each topic (see Appendix E).

3.4.6. Post-test

After the six sessions of classical writing lesson application in the control group and use of blogs for writing lessons for the experimental group, a post-test, which was identical to the pre-test, was applied to the groups (see Appendix F). The results were evaluated by the same two English teachers who give writing lessons at Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages, as well as a research assistant in the Department of English Language Teaching. According to the results, there was a statistically significant difference between the control and the experimental group. While the mean score for the control group was 45, the mean score for the experimental group was 64. The scores of the control group are between 35 and 67 and the standard deviation is 8.38. However, the scores of the experimental group are between 50 and 79, and the standard deviation is 8.47.

3.4.7. The Blog Use Evaluation Questionnaire

A questionnaire was applied to the experimental group after a six-week period of study. The researcher prepared a pool of roughly 80 items by reviewing questionnaires in the related literature. Then, the items were categorized, and some items which incorporated similar concepts were combined. After this phase, the number of the items on the questionnaire was reduced to 45. This 45-item questionnaire was then examined by two researchers, one of whom is an experienced instructor in questionnaire development from the Department of Educational Sciences; the other is an English language instructor. The questionnaire, which consisted of 23 items in its final form, was used as a data gathering instrument to evaluate the attitudes of the learners towards blog use for writing lessons in the current study (see Appendix G). With this questionnaire, learners were asked to evaluate the blog use application for writing lessons after a six-week writing course. The results showed that most of the students in the experimental group found using blogs for writing lessons useful. The results of this questionnaire were also supported by the post-test scores of the group.

3.5. DATA COLLECTION

At the beginning of the study, a pre-test and Internet usage questionnaire were applied to both groups to assess their writing skills and to check their awareness and attitudes concerning the Internet.

During the study period, the control group had classical writing lessons which consisted of activities such as doing the exercises in the pack, completing the four-squares and writing drafts. However, the experimental group was additionally supported by blogs. Both groups had the same teachers for general English, reading and writing lessons. After a six-week study process, a post-test was applied to both the experimental and the control groups. The experimental group was also given a questionnaire for evaluating the blog use method of teaching writing.

3.6. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

In order to establish the content validity of the survey questions, an expert in the field was asked to assess the clarity of the items in the questionnaire. Taking the expert's opinion on the clarity of the items into account, some of the items were revised, and their final forms were determined in light of the recommendations.

The reliability and validity aspects of a study generally deal with issues concerning the quality of the data and the appropriateness of the method that was used in the study. By definition, the reliability of a study is related to the degree of comparability between outcomes when a study is repeated under similar conditions, whereas validity indicates whether a study measures what it is supposed to measure (Barnhardt, Kevorkian, & Delett, 1998; Henning, 1991).

In terms of the reliability of a writing assessment, the students' written productions should receive similar scores on different occasions and by different raters (Hyland, 2003). However, the genre of the written product, the physical conditions, the time of the exam, and the rubric used for evaluation can be regarded as factors which may affect the reliability of evaluating written exams. Additionally, unclear terminology in the rubric and insufficient training of the raters might also impair reliability (Henning, 1991). In order to increase the validity and the reliability of a writing assessment, the assessment procedure should be defined clearly, the physical conditions should be set equally, the topic and genre of the writing tasks should be

restricted, and the scoring rubric which defines the criteria by which the written products are judged should be prepared carefully (Gronlund, 1998; Hughes 2003).

In the current study, in order to evaluate students' success, all of the participants were asked to write an essay in which they were expected to reflect their writing abilities. This assessment was used to evaluate students' success in compare-contrast essay writing. The same process was also applied at the end of the study under the same conditions. The data gathered from the rating of the students' written products were also used to determine the developments in students' writing; these results were used to answer the research question concerning whether using blogs has an effect on learners' writing skills. Therefore, in order to provide a reliable score for the participants' written products, the same conditions, the same genre and the same raters were used throughout the study. In terms of genre type, students were asked to write a compare-contrast essay discussing the advantages and disadvantages of preparatory classes or the Internet, under same conditions.

Another tool which helps to establish the reliability of a study is triangulation, which entails collecting data from different sources. In this respect, using blogs to enhance students' writing performance constitutes an appropriate resource, since they provide feedback on the learners' progress from the learners, their peers and the teachers. Accordingly, the feedback given to the participants both by their peers and their teacher was recorded.

According to Hyland (2003), the reliability of grading students' written production has two dimensions, including inter-rater reliability and intra-rater reliability. While inter-rater reliability refers to different raters' level of agreement on the scoring of the same product, intra-rater reliability deals with the inner level of agreement of the same rater's scoring of different products.

In this sense, the training of raters concerning the assessment criteria is vital for the reliability of a study. As Lumley and McNamara (1993) suggest, implementing rater training sessions on the assessment criteria might reduce raters' disagreement on the scoring of different written products. The training process of the raters consists of several procedures. First of all, the raters score the product independently; their scores are compared, and then their agreements and disagreements are confronted. If the disagreement level is high, then the training session is continued until they reach a common agreement. After these training sessions, the raters can be asked to score the written product of the participants.

In the current study, in order to establish rater reliability, all of the raters were trained on how to evaluate a writing paper. Moreover, two of the raters were selected from among the experienced writing teachers working in the same institution and for the same level students. Another rater who was a research assistant in the Department of English Language Teaching was also included to the study. Consequently, 3 different raters evaluated the learners' written products.

Validity is the extent to which an instrument measures what it intends to measure (Lado, 1965). In terms of the validity of the data that was used in the current study, the items in the questionnaire were prepared and revised with respect to the opinions of the experts. The resulting questionnaire, which consisted of 23 items in its final form, was used as a data gathering instrument to evaluate the attitudes of the learners towards blog use for writing lessons in the current study.

3.7. PROCEDURE

3.7.1. Preparation Period for the Study

In the first term, consisting of a 10-week English language education course at the A1 level, the learners were introduced to the process of writing short sentences with linking words. Before the end of the first term, they had learned to write organized paragraphs in English. In the second term, the groups were determined according to the A1 completion examination scores, and two classes were chosen at random. After determining the groups, the preparation period, which was a 24-hour lesson term consisting of the first 4 weeks of A2 level instruction, was begun.

In order to apply the pre-determined writing lessons, the first four weeks of the term were used for preparation, while the learners continued receiving instruction. The first week of the preparation period was spent in determining and recognizing the groups. In the second week, the package was put into use, and exercises from the books were carried out in the lesson period. These consisted of paragraph completion, linking word and conjunction exercises, as well as reading texts and completing exercises on the topics. The format of the pack was followed, and essay outline exercises and four square exercises, which are the key for writing essays and paragraphs, were studied. In order to use the four square technique, firstly, the learners were taught how to write a main idea and supporting details. Meanwhile, a pre-test and a questionnaire were prepared, accounting for the opinions of the two experts in the field. The questionnaire was determined by collecting 80 questions about the topic in a pool. The

pre-test was prepared with reference to the opinions of the same experts regarding similar topics in the curriculum. In the third week of the period, in addition to the exercises which were also carried out in the second week, the learners were taught how to write minor details which were connected to the supporting details and the main idea. In the fourth and final week of the preparation period, the pre-test and the Internet usage questionnaire were applied to both groups, and the pre-test was evaluated by two English Language instructors at Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages, as well as a research assistant who had completed his master's degree in the Department of English Language Teaching. According to the results of the pre-test, no statistically significant differences were found between the groups. While the mean score for the control group was 40, it was 40.8 for the experimental group. Since there were no statistically significant differences between the groups, groups were assigned randomly as the control and the experimental group. After determining the groups, learners from both classes were asked to answer a questionnaire about their Internet use habits to evaluate their experience with the Internet. According to the results of the questionnaire, no statistically significant differences were found between groups in terms of their Internet use habits.

When the experimental group was chosen, the researcher decided to use the blog resource found at www.blogger.com after getting the opinions of the experts, since it was easy to create a personal blog page and was free of charge. After deciding on the blog provider, a teacher blog was created, and sample writings, four-square files, and videos were posted to it. Before beginning the study process, the learners exchanged email addresses, and communication was supplied through emails until the learners in the experimental group had created their blog pages. Before beginning the study, the experimental group was given information about the program in terms of their 6 weeks of writing education and blog use. Later, a short training session about blogs and information about creating, posting and commenting on a blog page were provided. Some practice sessions were conducted, and some of the participants' blog pages were created out of class time. As it was made clear in the results of the Internet use questionnaire, only one of the participants had created a blog page prior to the study. When the learners had created their blogs, they were instructed to follow their peers' blogs; accordingly, before the first session, every student added and followed each other's blogs. After completing these procedures, the participants and the researcher were ready for the study process.

After the 4-week preparation period, the study was conducted for 6 weeks and included 12 sessions, which were equal to 36 hours of lesson time; the duration of each lesson was 45

minutes. Each week consisted of two separate sessions of 3 successive lesson hours. The details for the weeks and for each session will be given in the following section.

3.7.2. Application of the Study

Week 1

After four weeks of preparation and determination of the groups, the participants started learning to write short essays in the first week.

Session 1

This session consisted of 3 successive hours of lesson time. The topic of the first week was writing compare-contrast essays. Similar lessons were done for the experimental and the control groups during the class hours. In order to teach learners how to write compare-contrast essays, the topic “the advantages and disadvantages of mobile phones” was given in the writing package. This session was spent on brainstorming ideas about “the advantages and disadvantages of mobile phones.” Before passing on to the four-square phase, the learners completed the exercises in the pack. These exercises consisted of reading passages about mobile phones and true-false exercises. Moreover, learners were given some tips before they filled in their four-squares. These tips also covered the linking words that they might possibly use in their drafts.

Session 2

In this session, which consisted of 3 successive hours of lesson time, learners were expected to share ideas and put forward their suggestions. They were asked to create two different four-squares, one of which explained the advantages and the other the disadvantages of mobile phones. In their four-squares, the learners were asked to find a main idea for their squares; they were also asked to fill in their squares with supporting details, minor details and a wrap-up sentence.

Week 2

In the second week of the study, the learners had to complete their four-squares; they were then given until the third week to write their first essays.

Session 3

This session started with 3 successive hours of lesson time. The procedure was the same as in the previous session. However, the learners had until the end of this session to create their four-squares. The learners used the tips in the package and the ideas they shared during the previous sessions to fill in their four-squares.

Session 4

As in the previous session, the duration of this session was 3 lesson hours. During the session, the participants peer-checked the four-squares they had created in the previous session in a communicative atmosphere. Then the learners reshaped their four-squares about “the advantages and the disadvantages of mobile phones” according to the feedback they got from their peers. Getting feedback helped to improve the learners’ four-squares through the sharing of ideas. Later, the learners reviewed and completed their second four-squares and then showed these to their teacher to get his feedback. Getting feedback from their peers and their teacher also improves learners’ written products, since the information in the four-squares are included in their writing. Following this phase, the learners were ready to write their first drafts; this was given as homework.

The students in the control group wrote their first drafts about the advantages and the disadvantages of mobile phones in paper and pencil and were told to get their peer feedback within 2 days; on the other hand, the experimental group posted their first drafts about the same topic on their blog pages and were told to post peer feedback within 2 days. The teacher blog was also used by the participants of the experimental group, since it included videos about the topic. Moreover, a sample four-square, which was created through the ideas of the learners, was posted on the teacher blog to help the participants.

After getting peer feedback, the participants of the control group wrote their second drafts and handed in their writing products to their teacher. The teacher reviewed the learners’ second drafts and gave them back to the students within 3-4 days. However, the participants of the experimental group posted their second drafts on their blogs after getting their peers’ feedback. Afterward, the teacher posted his comments on each learner’s post within 3-4 days.

Finally, while the participants of the control group handed in their final drafts to their teacher, the participants of the experimental group posted their final drafts on their blog pages.

Handing in and posting the final drafts phase were the last duty of all of the participants for the first essay, which was about “the advantages and the disadvantages of mobile phones.”

Week 3

In the second week of the study, the learners started a new topic, consisting of a compare and contrast essay about “the advantages and the disadvantages of living in big cities.”

Session 5

In this session, which consisted of 3 successive lesson hours, the learners were expected to write another compare and contrast essay. The topic for weeks 3 and 4, which includes sessions 5, 6, 7 and 8, was “the advantages and the disadvantages of living in big cities and the countryside.” Since the type of writing was similar to that which was done in the previous sessions, the learners were expected to show improvement in their writing.

As with the previous sessions, similar lessons were given for the experimental and the control groups during the class hours. This session was spent in brainstorming ideas about “the advantages and disadvantages of living in big cities;” furthermore, the learners were expected to compare “life in big cities with life in the countryside.” Learners were expected to share and put forward their ideas in this session.

Session 6

Similar activities to the fifth session were done at this stage. The activities in the writing pack were completed in order to prepare learners for creating their four-squares.

Week 4

In this week, learners filled in their four-squares and then wrote their second essays, afterward, their first and second drafts were checked by their peers and their teacher.

Session 7

This session consisted of 3 hours of successive writing courses, as with the previous sessions. Learners were asked to create two different four-squares, one of which discussed “the advantages and disadvantages of living in big cities” and the other of which described “the advantages and disadvantages of living in the countryside.” Firstly, the learners were asked to

find a main idea for their squares, and then they were asked to fill in their squares with supporting details, minor details and a wrap-up sentence.

Session 8

This session started with 3 successive hours of lesson time. However, the writing phase continued to the next session with peer checking, as well as getting feedback from the teacher. During the lesson time, the participants peer-checked their four squares in a communicative atmosphere. Then the learners shaped their four-squares about the topic according to the feedback they got from their peers. Later, the learners reviewed and completed their second four-squares and then showed them to their teacher to get his feedback. Getting feedback from their peers and their teacher also improves learners' writing products, since the information in the two different four-squares were blended in their writing. After deciding on peers who were different from the peers for the previous topic, learners were ready to write their first drafts; this was given as homework.

The participants of the control group wrote their first drafts about the advantages and the disadvantages of living in the big cities and the countryside with paper and pencil and were told to get their peer feedback within 2 days. However, the experimental group posted their first drafts on the same topic on their blog pages, and they were told to post peer feedback within 2 days. The teacher blog was also used by the participants of the experimental group, since it included videos related to the topic. Moreover, a sample four-square of "the advantages and the disadvantages of living in the big cities and the countryside," which was created through the ideas of the learners, was posted on the teacher blog to help the participants.

After receiving peer feedback, the participants of the control group wrote their second drafts and handed in their writing products to their teacher. The teacher reviewed the learners' second drafts and gave them back to the students within 3-4 days. However, the participants of the experimental group posted their second drafts to their blogs after getting their peers' feedback. Afterward, the teacher posted his comments on each learner's posts within 3-4 days.

Finally, while the participants of the control group handed in their final drafts to their teacher, the participants of the experimental group posted their final drafts on their blog pages. Handing in their final drafts and posting the final drafts were the last duty of all of participants

with respect to the second essay, which was on the topic of “the advantages and disadvantages of living in the big cities and the countryside,”

Week 5

In this week, learners learned a new type of essay writing, definition essays, and they were also supported with the activities from their books. Moreover, the learners created their four-squares about the new topic in the 10th session in the 5th week.

Session 9

This session consisted of 3 successive hours of lesson time. This session’s topic was writing a definition essay, and learners were given information about the essay type through use of the package. Afterward, both groups continued to follow the package and completed the related exercises.

In order to teach learners how to write a definition essay, in this session, “the definition of happiness” was given as a topic in the writing package. This session was spent in brainstorming ideas about defining happiness. The learners were expected to share ideas and put forward their opinions in this session. They were asked to create their four-squares to define happiness. In their four-squares, the learners were asked to find a main idea, and then they were asked to fill in their squares with supporting details, minor details and a wrap-up sentence.

Session 10

This session consisted of 3 successive hours of lesson time and was the final session of the study. During the lesson time, the participants checked their peer’s four-squares in a communicative atmosphere.

Week 6

This was the last week and also the last session of the study; in addition, it was the last lesson at the A2 level. After sessions 11 and 12, the learners were asked to fill out a questionnaire which was prepared with the help of expert in the field to evaluate their attitudes toward using blogs for their writing lessons.

Session 11

In this session, which consisted of 3 successive hours of writing instruction, the learners shaped their four-squares about “the definition of happiness” according to the feedback they got from their peers in the previous session. Later, the learners reviewed and completed their second four-squares and then showed them to their teacher to get his feedback. After deciding on peers who were different from the peers for the previous topic, the learners were ready to write their first drafts; this was given as homework.

Session 12

This session was the final session of the study process and continued for 3 successive hours of writing course instruction. After the previous session, the control group was asked to write their first drafts on “the definition of happiness” in paper and pencil, and the students were told to get their peer feedback within 2 days. At the same time, the experimental group was told to post their first drafts to their blog pages and to post peer feedback within 2 days. The teacher blog was also used by the participants of the experimental group, since it included videos about the topic. Moreover, a sample four-square of the definition of happiness, which was created through the ideas of the learners, was posted on the teacher blog to help the participants.

After getting peer feedback, the participants of the control group wrote their second drafts and handed in their writing products to their teacher. The teacher reviewed the learners’ second drafts and gave them back to the students within 3-4 days. On the other hand, the participants of the experimental group posted their second drafts to their blog pages after getting their peers’ feedback. Afterward, the teacher posted his comments on each learner’s posts within 3-4 days.

Finally, while the participants of the control group handed in their final drafts to their teacher, the participants of the experimental group posted their final drafts to their blog pages. Handing in their final drafts and posting the final drafts phase were the last duty of all of the participants for the third essay.

3.8. DATA ANALYSIS

For data analysis, a pre-test, the Internet usage questionnaire, a post-test and the blog use evaluation questionnaire were all analyzed.

To analyze the pre-test, firstly, the learners' essays were graded by three English teachers, and the Excel program was used to find the mean score for the individual and class grades. Two of the English teachers were already English language instructors at Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages; the other English teacher was a research assistant who had completed his master's degree. Secondly, an Internet usage questionnaire was applied, and learners' attitudes toward Internet use and blog awareness were sought. The experimental group and the control group were determined and the study conducted. At the end of the blog use application, a post-test was applied to both groups to determine their progress and whether blog use application had a positive effect on the experimental group learners' writing skills. Then, a blog use evaluation questionnaire was applied to obtain learners' opinions on the blog use application for their writing lessons.

CHAPTER 4 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

In this study, the aim was to answer the research questions concerning whether using blogs for writing courses enhances the writing performance of students and whether the use of videos has an effect on increasing student success in writing in English. In order to answer these questions, the pre-test and post-test results were analyzed using the Excel program and interpreted with the help of an expert. The evaluation of the questionnaires, including the Internet usage questionnaire and the blog use evaluation questionnaire, were also analyzed by the Excel program and interpreted with an expert. In this chapter, the analyzed data and the interpretations will be given.

4.2. LEARNERS' PROFICIENCY LEVELS

Learners' Proficiency levels were determined by the A1 completion examination conducted by the Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages at the end of the first term. The learners who started their English language education from the level A1, including the control and the experimental groups, completed their A1 level education and were placed into A2 classes randomly; they started their A2 level education before onset of the study.

4.3. PRE-TEST SCORES

In order to determine the learners' writing skill proficiency, a pre-test examination was applied before the blog use application started, and their levels were found to be similar; there was no statistically significant difference between their writing skills according to the pre-test mean scores. Three different assessments for each candidate were conducted, and the gathered data was used for a final grade through the use of the Excel program. The results were analyzed with an expert, and the mean score for each group was found. There was no statistically significant difference between the groups. The mean score for first group was 40, and 40.8 for the second group. The lowest grade for first group was 33; it was also 33 for the second group. The highest grade for the first group was 68, while it was 62 for the second group.

4.4. POST-TEST SCORES

After the treatment, a post-test was applied to both groups, and the results were compared and analyzed. During the study, the control group had writing lessons based on their packages. The experimental group used the package and was also supported by using blogs and videos. In order to find out whether the use of blogs and videos to aid the writing lessons enhanced the learners' writing skills, a post test was applied to both groups at the end of the 6-week study. The post-test exam was the same as the one used for the pre-test. Each learner's post-test was assessed three times, and the mean scores for each learner and for each group were determined using the Excel program. The mean score for the control group was 45, and it was 64 for the experimental group. The lowest score was 35 for the control group and 52 for the experimental group. The highest score for the control group was 67, while it was 79 for the experimental group.

4.5. THE INTERNET USE QUESTIONNAIRE

After determining the control and the experimental groups, an Internet usage questionnaire was applied to both groups to investigate whether there was a difference in the participants' Internet habits in each group. The results of questionnaire were analyzed with the help of an expert in the field. According to the participants' responses to the questionnaire, all of the learners had an email address except for two learners, one from the first and one from the second group. Analysis of the Internet use questionnaire revealed that none of the participants had used blogs before except one student. According to the analysis of the questionnaire, it was understood that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups that would possibly affect the study. The following tables briefly show the Internet use profiles of the participants. Though the original form of the questionnaire was applied as a 5-point Likert scale, the participants' responses to the questionnaire were interpreted through under three main categories, which were agree, not sure and disagree.

Table 2

The results of the Internet use questionnaire.

Questionnaire Items		The Control Group			The Experimental Group		
		Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree
		%	f	%	f	%	f
1	I found the Internet useful.	80	20	0	93	7	0
2	The Internet eases my life.	93	7	0	100	0	0
3	I log onto the Internet every day.	33	33	33	53	7	40
4	I do my homework by using the Internet.	67	13	20	80	13	7
5	I read comments on the Internet.	73	13	13	80	0	20
6	I write comments on the Internet.	40	13	47	47	20	33
7	I check my email account every day.	33	13	53	47	7	47
8	I like communicating through emails.	27	27	47	33	33	33
9	I send at least 1 email every day.	13	13	73	20	20	60
10	I know how to use blogs.	27	33	40	20	20	60
11	I find the information on blogs beneficial.	13	47	40	40	20	40
12	I follow blog pages.	13	33	53	27	13	60
13	I read comments on blog pages.	27	13	60	53	7	40
14	I write comments on blog pages.	7	13	80	7	33	60

As it can be seen from the results, 80% of the first group found the Internet beneficial, while 93% of the second group found it beneficial. In addition to this result, 33% of the first group and 53% of the second group log onto the Internet every day; and 67% of the first group and 80% of the second group do their homework using the Internet. Although the second group of learners seem to use the Internet more, 27% of the first group know how to use blogs, while only 20% of the second group reported knowing how to use blogs. However, 13% of the first group and 27% of the second group follow blog pages, and approximately two times more students from the second group read comments on blogs. Finally, it was concluded that although the second group of learners tended to use the Internet more frequently, the blog use habits of both groups were approximately the same; furthermore, 7% of the learners from

each group had written comments on blog pages, which helped to determine that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups.

4.6. THE BLOG USE EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRE

At the end of the study process, the learners were also asked to answer the blog use evaluation questionnaire. The aim of this questionnaire was to determine the learners' attitudes toward using blogs for their writing lessons. With the help of the questionnaire, the researcher investigated whether learners found using blogs beneficial and whether it had a positive effect or improved their writing skills. According to the results of the questionnaire, it can be concluded that the learners mostly found using blogs to be beneficial.

In the blog use evaluation questionnaire, 23 items were asked of the participants, and there were four kinds of questions: items 1-4 were demographic and asked about their departments, gender, computer knowledge and Internet usage frequencies. However, since this information was not used for the study, the results and the analysis of this part were not taken into consideration.

Therefore, the analysis of the blog use evaluation questionnaire was conducted for the other sections, in which learners evaluated the writing courses through using blogs.

In the other parts of the questionnaire, the participants were asked to respond to communicational, emotional and pedagogical items. The questionnaire items 5-22, which related to emotional, pedagogical and communicational aspects of blog use, were asked of the participants to learn their opinions about blog use for writing classes. The detailed analysis of the items in the questionnaire is presented below.

In the fifth questionnaire item, the respondents were asked to answer by rating the question "Using blogs for writing lessons contributed to my writing skill." Of the participants, 80% chose "I agree," 13% chose "not sure," and 7% said "no". One of the participants commented that his writing skill had improved more than he imagined. Using blogs helped him to write the things on his mind easily. The eighteenth questionnaire item, "Using blogs in writing lessons did not contribute to my writing skill" was the reverse of the fifth questionnaire item. As in the fifth question, 80% again found it useful, but 13% did not find useful, although this figure was 7% on the fifth item; however 7% answered that they were not sure, while 13% gave this answer for the fifth item. In contrast to the questionnaire item 18, one of the

participants gave her further ideas and said that using the Internet and blogs were useful and that they were great tools, reporting that she was more comfortable while writing on her blog.

Table 1

The results of the questionnaire items 5 and 18.

Item No		Agree		Not Sure		Disagree	
		f	%	F	%	f	%
5	Using blogs in writing lessons contributed to my writing skill.	12	80	2	13	1	7
18	Using blogs in writing lessons did not contribute to my writing skill.	2	13	1	7	12	80

For the sixth questionnaire item, “I believe that using blogs in writing lessons is a good method,” 80% agreed, 7% were “not sure,” and 13% said “no”.

Table 2

The results of the questionnaire item 6.

Item No		Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		F	%	f	%	f	%
6	I believe that using blogs in writing lessons is a good method.	12	80	1	7	2	13

In the seventh questionnaire item, the participants were asked to answer whether they liked to do their homework using blogs, and 73% said “yes,” 20% were not sure, and 7% said “no.” The learners shared their further ideas for the last item of the questionnaire. One of the participants said that it was motivating, educational and entertaining, and another said that using blogs for writing lessons is both entertaining and a different method.

Table 3

The results of the questionnaire item 7.

Item No		Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	F	%
7	I liked doing my writing homework via using blogs.	11	73	3	20	1	7

In the eighth questionnaire item, “my peers’ feedback to my posts on my blog were beneficial,” 53% of the participants found peer feedback to be beneficial, 33% were “not sure,” and 13% did not benefit from peer feedback. This item was crosschecked in the questionnaire item nineteen, which read “I benefited from feedback that I got from my peers by using blogs”. However, on this questionnaire item, 47% of the learners agreed, 40% were not sure, and 13% disagreed. One participant said that getting feedback from her peers was useful in helping her to correct her mistakes on her writing. However, another participant did not find giving peer feedback to be useful, noting that he would prefer to give and take feedback in the class, instead.

Table 4

The results of the questionnaire items 8 and 20.

Item No		Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		F	%	f	%	f	%
8	My peers’ feedbacks to my posts on my blog were beneficial.	8	53	5	33	2	13
20	I did not benefit from feedback that I got from my peers by using blogs.	2	13	6	40	7	47

For the ninth questionnaire item, which aimed to find out whether “using blogs for writing lessons improved their writing skill,” 80% agreed, 13% were not sure, and 7% disagreed.

Table 5

The results of the questionnaire item 9.

Item No		Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
9	Using blog in writing lesson improved my writing skill.	12	80	2	13	1	7

When the participants were asked to answer the tenth questionnaire item, “Giving feedback to my peers contributed to my writing skill,” 86% of the participants said “yes,” 7% said “not sure” and 7% said “no.” This result showed that giving feedback was mainly seen as beneficial, although there was some disagreement, which was also supported by the participants’ further opinions and comments to the questionnaire item 23. Participants found feedback both from their peers and their teacher useful. Moreover, one of the participants found that giving feedback to her peer on her blog was not an easy job. He added that in order to give feedback to his peer, first of all, his feedback should be clear and understandable, which caused him to be more careful; this indirectly had a positive effect on his writing performance.

Table 6

The results of the questionnaire item 10.

Item No		Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		F	%	f	%	F	%
10	Giving feedback to my peers contributed to my writing skill.	13	87	1	7	1	7

In the eleventh questionnaire item, the participants were asked to give their opinions about whether they recommend writing lessons via using blogs to their friends, and 73% said “yes,” while 27% were “not sure.” In their further comments, one of the participants remarked on the positive influence of the blogs on her performance and said that blogs should always be used for writing lessons.

Table 7

The results of the questionnaire item 11.

Item No		Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		F	%	f	%	f	%
11	I offer writing lessons via using blogs to my friends.	11	73	4	27	0	0

On the twelfth questionnaire item, “I felt more comfortable while doing my writing homework via using blogs,” 47% of the participants’ responses were “yes,” 47% were “not sure,” and 7% said they were uncomfortable when doing their homework on blogs.

Table 8

The results of the questionnaire item 12.

Item No		Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
12	I felt more comfortable while doing my writing homework via using blogs.	7	47%	7	47%	1	7%

On the thirteenth questionnaire item, the participants were asked to answer “Reading my posts on my blog later on motivated me to write again,” 53% said “I agree,” 33% were “not sure,” and 14% said “no.”

Table 9

The results of the questionnaire item 13.

Item No		Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
13	Reading my posts on my blog later on motivated me to write again.	8	53%	5	33%	2	13%

In the fourteenth questionnaire item, the participants were asked to answer “writing lessons via using blogs improved my in and out of class communication with my peers;” 67% said “agree,” 20% said “not sure,” and 13% said “no.”

Table 10

The results of the questionnaire item 14.

Item No		Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		F	%	f	%	f	%
14	Writing lessons via using blogs improved my in and out of class communication with my peers.	10	67%	3	20%	2	13%

The fifteenth questionnaire item, “I did not benefit from feedback that I got from my peers by using blogs,” was the reverse of the twentieth questionnaire item, and the results were the

same; 47% found peer feedback beneficial, 40% were “not sure,” and 13% found it not to be beneficial.

Table 11

The results of the questionnaire items 15 and 20.

Item No		Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
15	I benefited from feedback that I got from my peers by using blogs.	7	47%	6	40%	2	13%
20	I did not benefit from feedback that I got from my peers by using blogs.	2	13%	6	40%	7	47%

In addition to their peers’ feedback, whether they had benefited from their teacher’s feedback was asked as the sixteenth questionnaire item. Of the participants, 86% found their teacher’s feedback beneficial, 7% were not sure of this, and 7% found getting feedback from their teacher to be “not beneficial.” One of the participants gave a further comment and said that explanation of her mistakes on her blog page helped her to learn new words. In the nineteenth question, “I did not benefit from feedback that I got from my teacher by using blogs,” which is the reverse question of the sixteenth question; the result was a bit different. In this question 93% disagreed, 7% were not sure, and nobody agreed.

Table 12

The results of the questionnaire items 16 and 19.

Item No		Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		F	%	f	%	f	%
16	I benefited from feedback that I got from my teacher by using blogs.	13	86%	1	7%	1	7%
19	I did not benefit from feedback that I got from my teacher by using blogs.	0	0%	1	7%	14	93%

The seventeenth and the twenty-first questionnaire items were related to each other. In the seventeenth item, learners were asked, “If I had this lesson again, I would prefer to use blogs again;” 86% said “yes”, 7% were “not sure,” and 7% said “no.” However, in the reverse item, “If I had this lesson again, I would not prefer to use blogs again,” 80% said no and 20% said

“yes.” Moreover, one of the participants commented that using blogs made him/her more motivated to learn English, and blogs made writing homework fun.

Table 13

The results of the questionnaire items 17 and 21.

Item No		Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		F	%	f	%	f	%
17	If I had this lesson again, I would prefer to use blogs again.	13	86%	1	7%	1	7%
21	If I had this lesson again, I would not prefer to use blogs again.	3	20%	0	0%	12	80%

When the participants were asked whether they had problems while using the blogs in the twenty-second questionnaire item, 27% said “yes,” 13% were not sure and 60% did not have any problems. One of the participants said there should be more practice before using blogs; this may be because they had never used blogs before, although they often use the Internet in their daily lives. Another student had problems since she did not have a personal computer or a laptop. Moreover, among the 15 participants in the group, only one reported needed more practice.

Table 14

The result of the questionnaire item 22.

Item No		Agree		Not sure		Disagree	
		f	%	f	%	f	%
22	I had problems while using blogs.	4	27%	2	13%	9	60%

With respect to the participants’ responses to the questionnaire, it can be claimed that almost all of the participants found the use of blogs in the writing course beneficial in terms of improving their writing skills in the preparatory program.

This general finding was also supported by the comments of the participants given in answer to the open-ended question on the questionnaire. For instance, one participant stated that she found giving and getting feedback on her blog beneficial for writing better and producing grammatically correct sentences. A second respondent added that using computer and the Internet was great for education, and writing became fun.

Table 16

Pre-Test and Post Test Results of the Control and the Experimental Groups.

CONTROL GROUP'S SCORES				EXPERIMENTAL GROUP'S SCORES			
Participants	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Difference	Participants	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Difference
1	34	43	9	A	35	68	33
2	33	35	2	B	40	64	24
3	38	44	6	C	33	50	17
4	48	53	5	D	43	56	13
5	68	67	-1	E	40	75	35
6	40	44	4	F	38	63	25
7	40	45	5	G	62	79	17
8	30	36	6	H	50	67	17
9	43	53	10	I	35	73	38
10	34	35	1	J	35	64	29
11	40	45	5	K	45	52	7
12	38	50	12	L	35	53	18
13	36	42	6	M	36	66	30
14	37	41	4	N	47	65	18
15	35	39	4	O	38	59	21
MEAN SCORE	39.6	44.8	5.2	MEAN SCORE	40.8	63.6	22.8

As stated in the introduction part of the study, the first research question sought to answer whether using blogs for writing lessons enhances the writing performance of the students; respectively, a pre-test, an Internet usage questionnaire, a blog use and video application, a post-test, and the blog use evaluation questionnaire were applied.

The study was carried out in the second term of the academic year, which has three terms. The first 4 weeks of the term were used for the preparation period; then the control and the experimental groups were determined randomly, once it was understood that there were no statistically significant differences between the groups according to the results of the pre-test scores and the interpretation of the Internet usage questionnaire with an expert. During the six weeks of the study period, the learners in the experimental group were supported by using blogs and videos, while the control group studied only their writing packages. After the six

sessions of using blogs and watching videos for writing lessons, the study was concluded with a post-test. According to the results of the post-test, it was concluded that giving the writing lessons through the use of blogs had a positive effect on learners' writing skills and writing success from various aspects; this is also made clear from the learners' comments on the twenty-third question of the blog use evaluation questionnaire.

In their answers to the open ended questions, the learners firstly stated that using blogs is a new and an entertaining method to improve their writing skills. Moreover, they found getting and giving online feedback through the use of blog pages beneficial, and they became more motivated and thought critically while writing, since their posts could be read by others and were open to the public. Another reason for the learners' success was finding a real audience for their writing; as the writing was carried out through blogs, it was no longer just a piece of paper to be given to the teacher. Blogs enhance communication, and as a result, they motivate students to write; learners also became more motivated because they knew their posts would be read and criticized by others. Furthermore, blogs provide a free-of-charge platform for learners to express themselves. In addition to their posts, they could use their blog pages for their personal interests.

4.7. DISCUSSION

Writing is often considered by students to be difficult and boring (Taslacı, 2007). In order to make writing courses effective and useful for learners, the present study investigated whether using technology improved learners' writing skills. Moreover, learners' attitudes were also investigated in terms of whether they developed more positive attitudes towards using technological tools such as blogs for their writing courses. The present study aimed to make writing courses more enjoyable through the use of blogs, at the same time improving students' writing skills and increasing their success.

The participants in the study were at the level of A2 as determined by the *CEFR* (2001); these levels were determined by the A1 completion examination conducted by the Higher School of Foreign Languages after 10 weeks of A1 level courses. At the beginning of study, the learners were asked to write an essay, which was also used as a pre-test; no statistically significant differences were found between the two classes, and the classes were randomly assigned as the experimental and control groups. The scores of the pre-test were 40.8 for the experimental group and 40 for the control group. After determining the groups, both groups were asked to answer an Internet use questionnaire to investigate the attitudes of the learners towards using

the Internet. According to the results, no statistically significant differences were found which would possibly affect the result of the study. After the treatment, the learners were asked to write an essay, which was also used as a post-test, to investigate whether the use of blogs improved learners' success. The post-test mean score for the experimental group was 64, while the control group's mean score was 45.

The pre-test and post-test results were assessed by 2 writing course teachers and 1 research assistant in the department of English Language Teaching. To provide inter-rater reliability (Hyland, 2003), the assessment was carried out by different raters. Moreover, as Henning (1991) contends that unclear terminology in the rubric and insufficient training of the raters might also violate the reliability of the experiment, a scoring rubric was used in the study (see Appendix H). Additionally, in order to provide intra-rater reliability, the raters were trained before the study. After the assessment of the pre-test and post-test examinations, the results were also analyzed by an expert in the field. However, the standard deviation of the pre-test scores for the experimental group was 7.70 for the experimental group and 8.99 for the control group. Similarly, the standard deviation of the post-test scores of the experimental group was 8.47, while it was 8.38 for the control group. The standard deviations for both groups and for both assessments were quite high. One possible reason for this was that the scores were widely spread. Likewise, the highest score of the experimental group for the pre-test was 62, while the lowest was 33; the highest score of the control group for the pre-test was 67, while the lowest was 33. The scores were similarly widely spread in the post-test assessment. Namely, the highest score of the experimental group for the post-test was 79, and the lowest was 52, while the highest score of the control group for the post-test was 67 and the lowest was 35. As it is clear from the results of the pre-test and post-test evaluation, although the mean scores of the groups were similar, and there was no statistically significant difference between the groups, there may be differences in groups in terms of their writing skills.

To investigate the learners' attitudes towards using blogs for writing courses, a blog use evaluation questionnaire was applied. According to the analysis of the questionnaire, the participants found using blogs to be enjoyable and beneficial, and they helped the learners to improve their writing skills. In order to provide validity, firstly, a pool of questionnaire items was created, and after getting the opinions of experts in the field, a 23 item questionnaire was designed.

As a result, when the progress of the learners in both groups was compared and analyzed, it can be concluded that using blogs had a positive effect on learners' writing skills. Moreover, according to the analysis of the blog use evaluation questionnaire, it can be concluded that using blogs improved learner motivation and engaged learners to write. Moreover, using blogs created an authentic environment for writing courses and improved peer collaboration.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter summarizes the study. Firstly, the study will be summarized, and then the findings from the pre-test and post-test scores, the Internet usage questionnaire and the blog use evaluation questionnaire will be interpreted. Next, the pedagogical implications of teaching writing through using blogs for teachers and expectations for further research will be presented. The study will be concluded with suggestions for further studies.

5.2. OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

This study was conducted at Akdeniz University Higher School of Foreign Languages in the 2010-2011 academic year, with 30 participants whose levels were determined as A2 by passing the A1 completion level examination prepared by the testing and evaluation department of the school. In this study, answers were sought to the following research questions:

1. Does the use of blogs in the writing process enhance the writing performance of the students?
2. What are the students' views related to the use of blogs in their writing course at prep school?

The study was conducted with several different instruments, including the pre-test, the Internet usage questionnaire, the post-test, and the blog use evaluation questionnaire.

In order to compare the pre-test and post-test scores, which were evaluated by three English teachers, the Excel program was used, and the mean scores for both groups were analyzed. The development of each group was interpreted by an expert in the following section.

The Internet usage questionnaire, which was applied to both groups before the study to select the experimental group regarding the pre-test scores, was also interpreted with an expert, and no statistically significant differences were found according to the questionnaire results.

The blog use evaluation questionnaire was applied to the experimental group, and learners' attitudes toward using blogs in writing lessons were examined. The results of the

questionnaire were interpreted by using the Excel program along with an expert; the interpretation is given in the following section.

5.3. CONCLUSION

The results of the study are given in this section in the light of the research questions. To find the answers to the research questions, 30 EFL students from two different classes, whose English levels were determined by the Akdeniz University School of Foreign Languages A1 completion exam in the 2010-2011 academic year at the end of the first term, were used. Learners were randomly placed into two different classes with respect to their exam results by the program coordinator of the school. After determining the control and the experimental groups, the study was conducted, and the participants' writing performances were compared.

In terms of the first research question, the data collected from their pre-test and post test scores were analyzed, and it was concluded that blog use application for writing lessons improved the learners' writing skills. Although each group made progress, when their progress was compared, the progress in the experimental group was found to be statistically significant. Learners in the experimental group made 23.2% progress, while those in the control group made 5% progress. Moreover, the student in the control group who received the highest score in the pre-test made no progress. This may indicate that classical writing lessons based on a textbook or package have little or no effect on learners' progress, and technological tools could be more useful for writing lessons.

Additionally, according to the learners' answers to the blog use evaluation questionnaire, 80% of the learners found using blogs beneficial for their writing skills and thought using blogs for writing lessons was a good method. Of the participants, 73% offered writing lessons to their friends. Moreover, 87% found giving feedback to their posts on their blogs was beneficial for improving their writing skills and that getting feedback on their posts from their teacher was also beneficial. These results showed that most of the learners found using blogs to be a good way to improve their writing skills; this was supported by their post-test results.

The answers to the open-ended questions also supported the results of the questionnaire. The participants liked using blogs and mainly enjoyed the lessons. The learners usually found getting and giving feedback via blogs to be beneficial and added that they could reach their peers' and teacher's feedback whenever they needed. In addition to the pedagogical benefits of the blog use application for writing lessons, blogs are also motivational tools, as the learners stated in their answers.

In light of the results of the present study, it can be concluded that using blogs for writing instruction has a positive effect on learners' writing skills. As Zhang (2009) stated, blogs are a very versatile communication medium for use in education. Moreover, based on the results of the present study, it can be concluded that, in addition to the positive effects on writing skills, learners enjoyed using blogs for writing instruction, and peer collaboration was also improved. Additionally, it can be concluded that blogs offer interactional opportunities, which also creates an authentic atmosphere for learners to improve their writing skills. What is more, using technological tools for writing instruction makes the curriculum up-to-date. Sun and Chang (2012) point out that using technology has become an integral part of language education, and using blogs and their interactive and collaborative features can help students academically and improve students' process and academic writing knowledge.

In addition to the opportunities that using technological tools such as blogs offer in improving writing skills, they also motivate learners and engage them with their learning. Moreover, the learners enjoyed using blogs for their writing lessons.

As a result, the present study, which investigated the effect of using blogs in terms of success and learner attitudes, showed that the teaching methodology does not require any changes. Furthermore, using technological tools such as blogs provides some advantages. It makes writing courses fun within an authentic atmosphere and creates more interaction; via this interaction, peer collaboration improves.

5.4. PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS and SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This study demonstrated that using a blog application for writing lessons was beneficial. However, the study was limited to 30 participants enrolled in the Akdeniz University preparatory class writing course. Therefore, this study should be applied in other universities and may also be adapted for other skills such as speaking and reading.

Moreover, this study was limited to a six-week term; in order to get better results, similar studies should be conducted for a semester or a whole year.

Another point concerning this study was that the participants were all A2 level students; similar studies should be conducted at different levels.

Using blogs for pedagogical purposes offers many opportunities to both learners and teachers. Since using blogs does not require knowledge of programming or software, teachers can

easily integrate them into their teaching process; for the same reason, learners can easily be taught to use them for their learning. Blogs support constructivist learning, since they provide social environments, thus promoting social interaction among learners. In addition, peer collaboration is also established through peer interaction. Additionally, through their blog pages, learners may find a real audience for their written products; this may motivate them to write and improve the content of their writing. Therefore, this study indicates that using blogs for writing courses has a positive effect on learner success through peer collaboration and teacher feedback.

In addition to the benefits of blogs with respect to learner success, they are motivational and enjoyable tools. As stated by various researchers (Armstrong & Retterer, 2008; Ellison & Wu, 2008; Lance, 2006), blogs are motivating tools for learners and create an authentic atmosphere for learning. Moreover, blogs provide out of class learning, and as a result, learning becomes a part of daily life.

According to the results of the questionnaire in the present study, the learners became more motivated for writing lessons and expressed that they would like to use blogs if they took the same course again. Therefore, with increased motivation for writing, learners support each other and scaffold their peers in addition to being guided by their teacher.

Finally, teachers may find blogs to be a well-suited medium in guiding their learners to improve their writing skills. This study indicates that using blogs helps learners to improve both their writing content and proficiency, and teachers may find more authentic environments to make writing courses effective.

Suggestions for further studies can be summarized as follows:

- Since the study was conducted with 30 students in the Akdeniz University Preparatory Program, further studies should be conducted in other settings.
- The study was conducted for A2 level EFL learners; therefore, similar studies should be conducted for learners at different levels.
- According to the present study, blogs helped to improve learners writing skills in a 6-week course; therefore, similar studies might be conducted for longer periods.
- Learners expressed mainly positive attitudes toward using blogs for their writing class in the present study; however, similar studies with longer periods might be carried out, and these studies may be compared.

- The present study showed that learners' writing skills and motivation improved; however, further studies might be done to demonstrate the effect of using blogs to improve other skills, such as speaking, listening and learner motivation.

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APPENDICES

- 1. Appendix A** Internet Use Questionnaire
- 2. Appendix B** Training session www.blogger.com
- 3. Appendix C** Teacher blog
- 5. Appendix D** Sample Four-squares on teacher blog
- 6. Appendix E** Samples of Student blogs
- 7. Appendix F** Sample Pre-Test and Post-Test Papers
- 8. Appendix G** The Blog Use Evaluation Questionnaire
- 9. Appendix H** Scoring Rubric

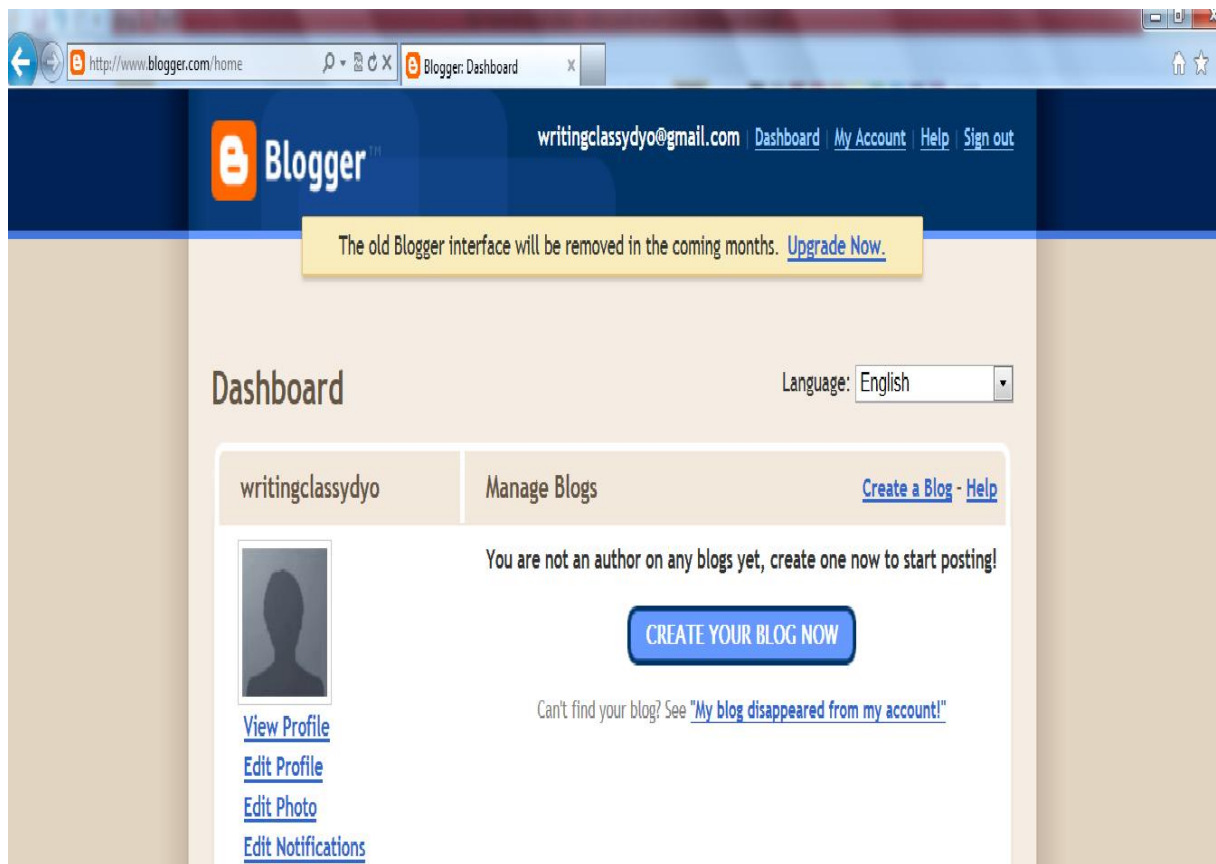
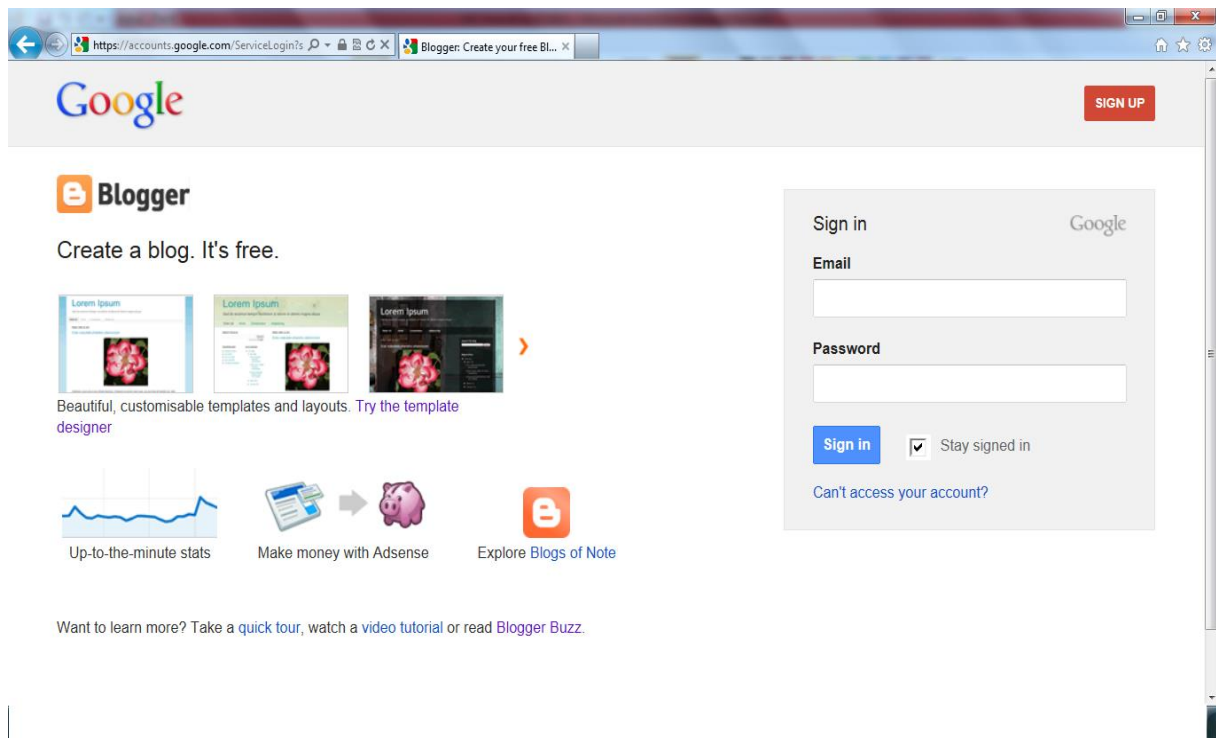
Appendix A

The Internet Use Questionnaire

THE INTERNET USE QUESTIONNAIRE						
Name & Surname:		Age:		Gender:		
To answer the questionnaire items in mark your answers as;						
		1.Totally Agree	2. Agree	3. Not Sure	4. Disagree	5. Totally Disagree
Questionnaire Items						
1	I found the Internet useful.	1	2	3	4	5
2	The Internet eases my life.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I log onto the Internet every day.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I do my homework by using the Internet.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I read comments on the Internet.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I write comments on the Internet.	1	2	3	4	5
7	I check my email account every day.	1	2	3	4	5
8	I like communicating through emails.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I send at least 1 email every day.	1	2	3	4	5
10	I know how to use blogs.	1	2	3	4	5
11	I find the information on blogs beneficial.	1	2	3	4	5
12	I follow blog pages.	1	2	3	4	5
13	I read comments on blog pages.	1	2	3	4	5
14	I write comments on blog pages.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix B

Training Session: Creating a blog on www.blogger.com



The screenshot shows the Blogger website's 'Name your blog' step. The browser address bar displays 'http://www.blogger.com/create-blog.g' and the page title is 'Blogger: Name your blog'. The Blogger logo and 'Push-Button Publishing' tagline are at the top. A progress bar shows three steps: 1. CREATE ACCOUNT, 2. NAME BLOG (selected), and 3. CHOOSE TEMPLATE. The main heading is '2 Name your blog'. Below it, there are two input fields: 'Blog title' and 'Blog address (URL)'. The 'Blog address (URL)' field is pre-filled with 'http://' and '.blogspot.com', with a 'Check Availability' link below it. A note states: 'Your blog's title will appear on your published blog, on your dashboard and in your profile.' Another note says: 'The URL you select will be used by visitors to access your blog. [Learn more](#)'. A large orange 'CONTINUE' button with a right-pointing arrow is at the bottom right. At the very bottom, there is a navigation bar with links: Home, Features, About, Buzz, Help, Discuss, Language, and Developers.

1 CREATE ACCOUNT 2 NAME BLOG 3 CHOOSE TEMPLATE

2 Name your blog

Blog title

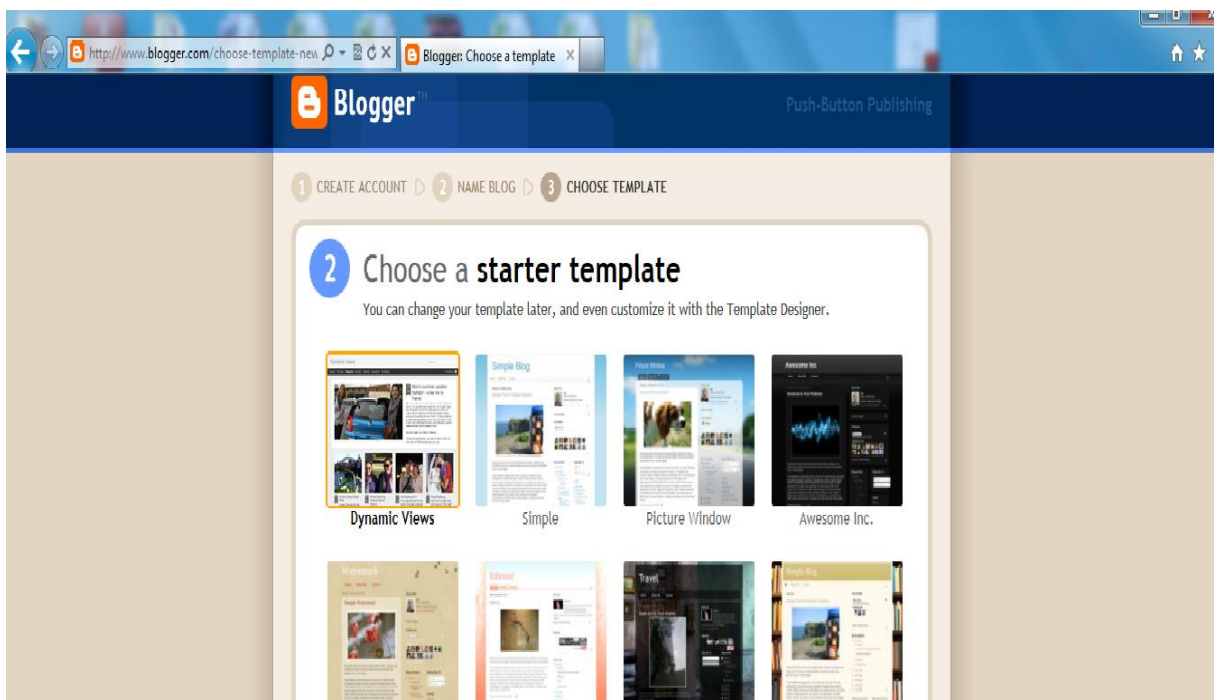
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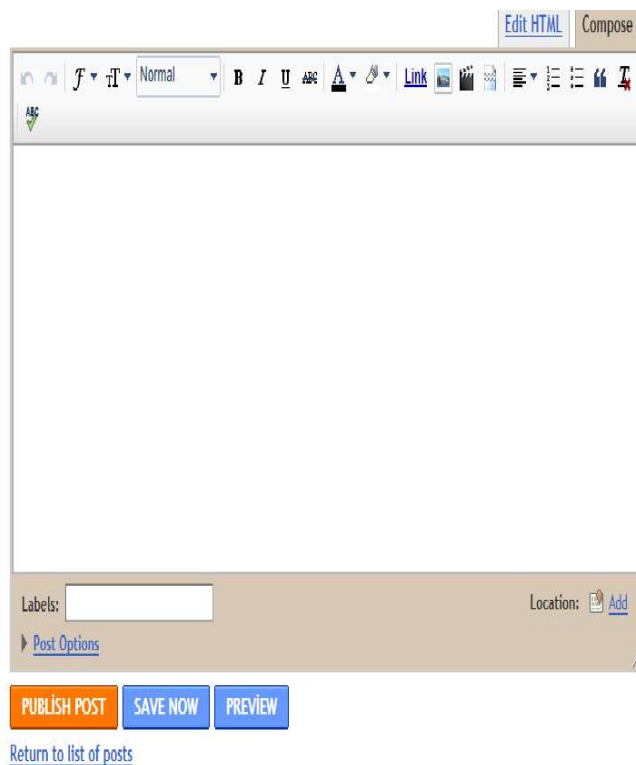
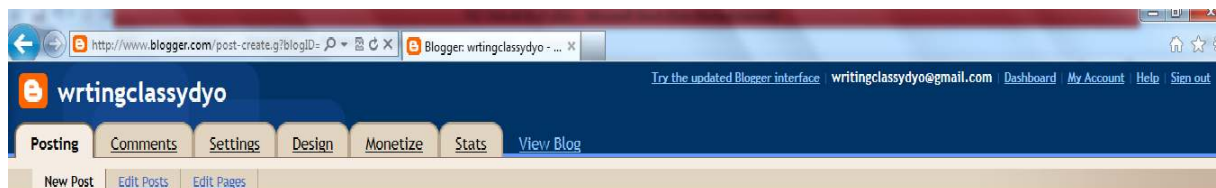
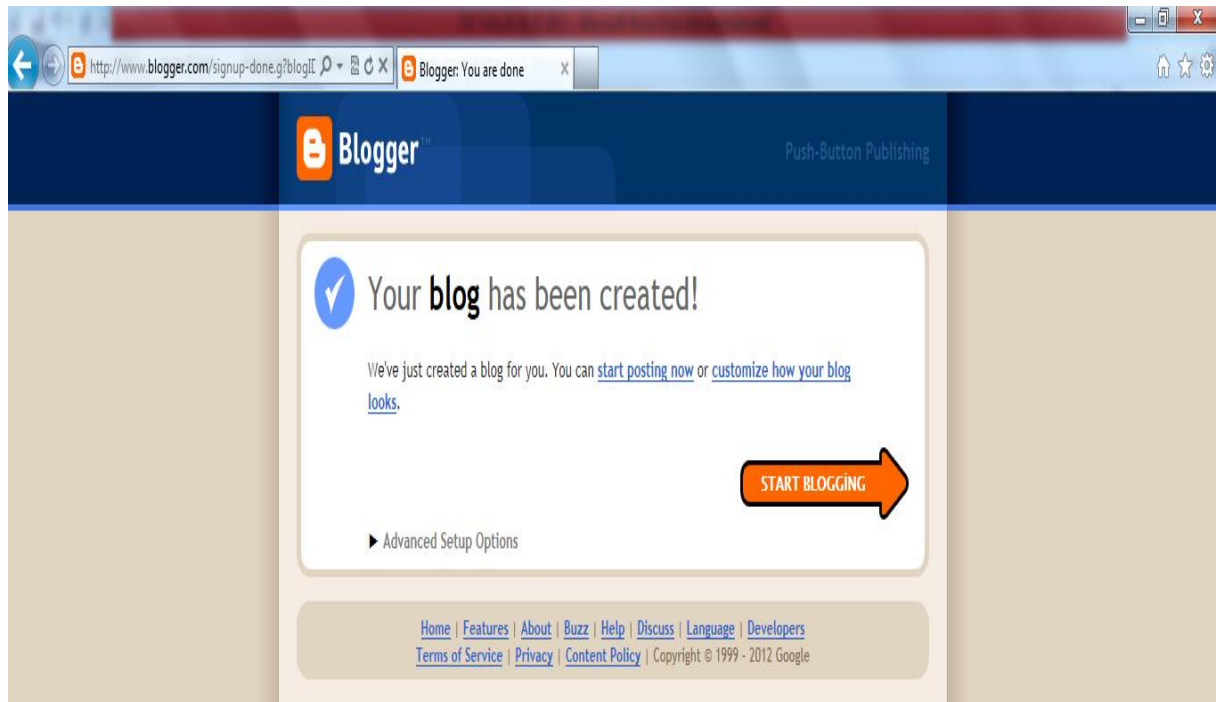
Your blog's title will appear on your published blog, on your dashboard and in your profile.

The URL you select will be used by visitors to access your blog. [Learn more](#)

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Appendix C

Teacher Blog

HAPPINESS

WHAT IS HAPPINESS?
If you want to be happy, be. -**Leo Tolstoy**
The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up. -**Mark Twain**

If only we'd stop trying to be happy we could have a pretty good time. -**Edith Wharton**

Man is fond of counting his troubles, but he does not count his joys. If he counted them up as he ought to, he would see that every lot has enough happiness provided for it. -**Fyodor Dostoevsky**
What a wonderful life I've had! I only wish I'd realized it sooner. -**Colette**
Happiness often sneaks in through a door you didn't know you left open. -**John Barrymore**

It's pretty hard to tell what does bring happiness. Poverty and wealth have both failed. -**Frank McKinney "Kin" Hubbard**

Happiness and sadness run parallel to each other. When one takes a rest, the other one tends to take up the slack. -**Hazelmarie Elliott ("Mattie")**

Happiness is a form of courage. -**Hollbrook Jackson**
It's never too late to have a happy childhood. -**Berke Breathed**

Happiness is not a goal; it is a by-product. -**Eleanor Roosevelt**
Happiness is a direction, not a place. -**Sydney J. Harris**

A truly happy person is one who can enjoy the scenery while on a detour. -**Author Unknown**
The secret of happiness is to find a congenial monotony. -**V.S. Pritchett**
The only way to avoid being miserable is not to have enough leisure to wonder whether you are happy or not. -**George Bernard Shaw**
The search for happiness is one of the chief sources of unhappiness. -**Eric Hoffer**

Posted by [redacted] at 10:11 AM No comments
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 http://blogspot.com/2011_02_13_archive... X

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http://blogspot.com/2011_02_13_arch 13/02/11 - 20...

MOBILE PHONE VIDEOS



WHAT IS HAPPINESS?

If you want to be happy, be... -Leo Tolstoy 1 (100%)

The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer someone. 0 (0%)

Happiness often sneaks in through a door you didn't know... 4 (40%)

Happiness and sadness run parallel to each other. When one... 0 (0%)

It's never too late to have a happy childhood. -Berle Breath... 0 (0%)

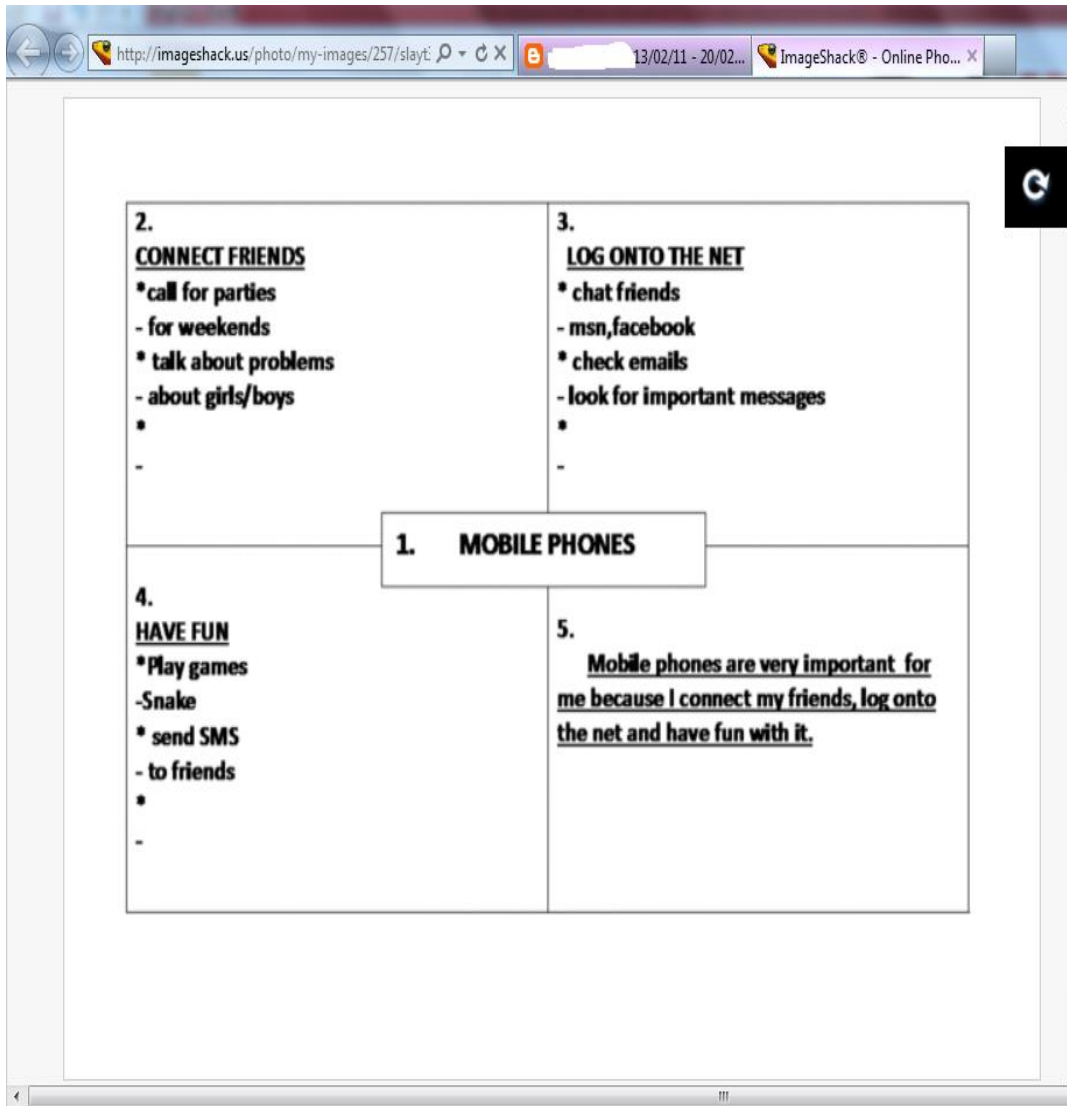
The secret of happiness is to find a congenial monotony. ~ 2 (20%)

Su and kider kullonin oy sejal: 7
Anket kätän

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Appendix D

Sample Four-squares



http://blogspot.com/2011_01_30_arch 30/01/11 - 06...

MOBILE PHONES DISADVANTAGES

2. BATTERY ENDS *you can't call your family or friends. - they got angry with you * you can't call the police or the ambulance -in an emergency * -	3. NO SERVICE * nobody can communicate with you - they are curious about you * you can't call your classmate or colleague -when you need help * -
4. THEY RING WHEN YOU DON'T WANT *Your colleague calls you while you are having a romantic dinner with your girl/boyfriend/ wife/husband -so you got angry * while you are sleeping -you wake up	5. <u>Mobile phones can causes problems for example sometimes their batteries ends, sometimes there is no service and sometimes they ring when you don't want</u>

Advantages

When you write about the advantages and disadvantages, they should be mentioned in different paragraphs.

So it's better to divide the positive and negative sides of the topic before starting writing.

Writing about Advantages and Disadvantages

It's easy to write a good method

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Appendix E

Samples of Students' Blogs



http://blogspot.com/2011/02/big-city 13/02/11 - 20/02... adlı kişi adlı...

BIG CITY LIFE

Most people don't want to live in the city but there are still some people who prefer stay in the town and say that they couldn't live anywhere else. Therefore we don't know the best big city life. People decide it according to your wishes. Let's look at the advantages and disadvantages of living in the city now.

Living in a big city also has advantages because people have social activities, different cultures and possibilities. People take lessons from tutor for example piano and violin lessons. People can go to a concert with friends in the big city. There are people of different cultures in the big city so that other people learn the different cultures. Possibilities are very broad in the big city. There are many hospitals, job opportunities, a lot of schools. Many big international companies have their locations in the cities so it's much easier to find a job in a big city.

Living in a big city also has disadvantages because it's security problems may cause depression and shanty town. I think dangerous big city life for the people when we don't know what will happen in the big city. Our life is full of dangers. For example may be traffic accident or thief can enter your home. Big cities very crowded therefore occurs in irregular settlements in city. People may cause depression because of the irregular life. People can't reach the hospital in an emergency, national income is reduced because of the crowd. Big city life is always noisy and never listen to your head.

As a result there are both advantages and disadvantages in the big city. We must be careful all the time everywhere. Life is full of dangers. Where we feel happy to live there.

Üyeler
Zahen üy

http://...blogspot.com/2011/02/big-cit... 13/02/11 - 20/02... adlı ki... adl...

18 Şubat 2011 13:04

... dedi ki...

Hi ...

'People can go to a concert with friends in the big city' rewrite these sentence to me. That way 'people can go to the concert with friends in the big city.'

'Say that they couldn't live anywhere else' these sentence should to be 'they say "we couldn't live anywhere else"

Sadly I don't understand these sentence "people decide it according to your wishes" you should correct these sentence.

"I think dangerous big city life for the people" Let's put in that way "I think, the big city life is dangerous for example"

In addition "big cities very crowded therefore..." these sentence you use to the 'therefore' wrong.

I hope you can understand me but my sentence maybe wrong. :(

18 Şubat 2011 13:05

 ... dedi ki...

Thanks :):):)

18 Şubat 2011 14:24



http://blogspot.com/2011/02/second 13/02/11 - 20/02... adlı kişi adlı...

(SECOND DRAFT) BIG CITY LIFE

Most people don't want to live in big cities but there are still some people who prefer stay in the town and they say we couldn't live anywhere else. Therefore we don't know the big city life. People decide according to their wishes. Let's look at the advantages and disadvantages of living in the big city now.

Living in a big city also has advantages because people have social activities, different cultures and possibilities. People take lessons from tutor for example piano and violin lessons. People can go to the concert with friends in the big cities. There are people of different cultures in the big cities so that other people learn the different cultures. Possibilities are very common in the big cities. There are many hospitals, job opportunities, a lot of schools. Many big international companies have their locations in the cities so it's much easier to find a job in the big cities.

Living in a big city also has disadvantages because it's security problems may cause depression and shanty town. I think the big city life is dangerous for the people when we don't know what will happen in the big city. Our life is full of dangers. For example may be traffic accident or thief can enter your home. Big cities very crowded therefore occurs in irregular settlements in city. People may cause depression because of their irregular lives. People can't arrive the hospitals in an emergency. National income is reduced because of the crowd. Big city life is always noisy and never listen to your head.

As a result there are both advantages and disadvantages in the big cities. We must be careful all the time everywhere. Life is full of dangers. Where we feel happy to live there.

Google
Üyeler
Zaten Ü



http://...blogspot.com/2011/02/second 13/02/11 - 20/02... adlı kişi adlı...

dedi ki...

Hi ...

Let's check your second writing

Introduction: A very good start. However, after prefer we use "V-ing" or "To + V1".

Second paragraph: Again this paragraph is very nice. But, look at the sentence which starts with "possibilities_" there is a spelling mistake

Third paragraph: in the first sentence after "because ITS" is the correct use not IT'S. rewrite the second sentence which starts with "I think..." especially the clause with "when is not clear to understand, revise it. Also the sentence with for example has a problem, you need to start it in this way ...THERE may be traffic accidents or THIEVES can ...". Also in the next sentence you forgot to use a verb. Moreover the second part of the sentence which starts with "Therefore ..." needs checking, the subject and verb of the sentence is wrong. Next the following sentence has a problem, because people do not cause depressions but they may "HAVE". The last sentence in this paragraph is also problem, the second part which starts with "and never listens to your head" is not a meaningful English sentence, and you thought it in Turkish. So find another way to write your sentence.

Conclusion: this part is also nice but what do you mean in the last sentence? It is not clear.

My advice: you have written a four paragraph essay and it is very good except for the 3rd paragraph, namely disadvantages paragraph. Rewrite this part, and also revise the small mistakes in the other parts and it will be very good.

Well done!

http://...blogspot.com/2011/02/illnes-of-... 13/02/11 - 20/02... adli kigi... adli topl... ILLNES of AGE

ILLNES of AGE

Mobile phones are just everywhere! At home, at school, in the street, on the bus etc. It's a big device communication nowadays but in spite of using, it's got a lot of advantages and disadvantages.

Mobile phones are important for our life. Firstly it's useful so we can ease communication for example we can call everyone whenever we want to! In addition it's an essential part of life, like computers. We can spend enjoyable times with mobile phone. We can take photos and this way we take grab interesting moments. In 21 century, mobile phone was global device for humans so everybody uses it. Young people, old people, students, bussinesman, housewives and children can use easily. While everybody using mobile phone it useaged wide spread for example when we went to picnic we can use.

It also has disadvantages although it's advantages. Firstly it's potentially deadly. Directly related to the exposure to radiation. When we exposed to radiation we've less brain fluid. In our body, reveal many diseases for example alzheimer, brain cancer, fatigue. In addition when we used mobile phone we spend a lot of time. We speak on the phone all the time with our friends so we don't do homework. If we use mobile phone all the time it keep busy our life and it becomes boring. It makes us asocial.

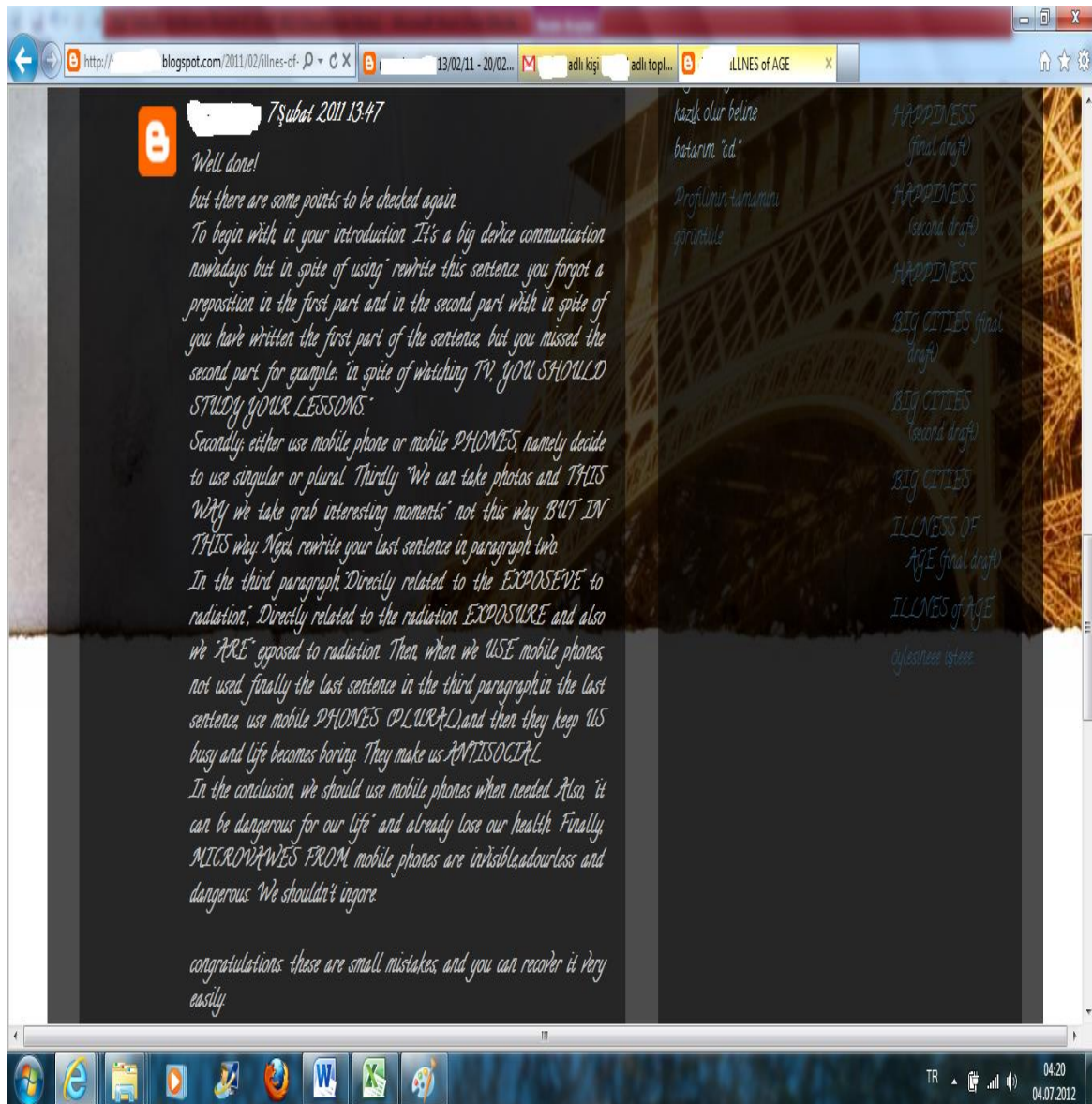
We should use mobile phone when we needed. If we can't give up using mobile phone all the time it's dangerous for our life. Mobile phone may take years to reveal itself even decades but we already get lose our healthy. Mobile phone is invisible, silent and odourless a dangerous. We don't ignore. We must be careful.



Bir gün çok bunalırsun denizin dibinde yosunlara takılmış gibi soluksuz. Sakın unutma gökyüzüne bakmayı. Gökyüzü serindir gökyüzü herkesindir...

İzleyiciler

Bu sİteye katılın
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http://...blogspot.com/2011/02/healthy-life-or-i 13/02/11 - 20/02... adlı kişi A.G. adlı topl... HEALTH

HEALTHY LIFE OR MOBILE PHONES (second draft)

HEALTHY LIFE OR MOBILE PHONES

Mobile phones are a lot advantages and disadvantages. Some peoples think it's a useful but some peoples don't think it's useful. They don't like mobile phones. For example firstly the doctors. But we don't to forget mobile phones are very important sometimes.

Firstly mobile phones are important for we life. Peoples should have a mobile phones for easy communication. Includeing this video calls and conferance calls. If you don't go to job, you can conferance calls. Also it's very enjoyable. You can send SMS any moment. So you don't be bored.

Secondly mobile phones are have disadvantages. Specially it's harmful for children. It's cause to raises alone people and children's are difficult to understand. Mobile phones expose to radiation. This is canser's and genetic damage's resault. If we can healthy life, we don't use mobile phones.

My opinion mobile phones is sometimes necessary. So when we needed use mobile phones.

İzle
Üye
Blo
▼ 2
▼

http://...blogspot.com/2011/02/healthy-life-or-i... 13/02/11 - 20/02... adlı kişi... adlı topl... HEALTHY LIF

4 Şubat 2011 07:06

Hi'

Let's check your writing:

At first, pay attention to the capital letter use. And I will check some parts and correct them. But you will change the others

First paragraph: Mobile Phones HAVE a lot of advantages. Some PEOPLE think THEY are A useful but OTHERS DON'T LIKE MOBILE PHONES SUCH AS DOCTORS. HOWEVER, mobile phones are very important sometimes(at times).

Second paragraph: Mobile phones are important for OUR life. Also, rewrite these sentence "Peoples should have A mobile phones for easy communication" and "Includeing this video calls and conferance calls". You can connect these two sentences. Then, "If you don't WANT TO go to job, you can MAKE conferance calls". Next, "So you ARE NOT bored."

Third paragraph: "Secondly mobile phones ARE/HAVE disadvantages" you used two verbs here! Then "It's cause to raises alone people and children'S are difficult to understand." Again you have two verbs "it is/cause" and also "to raises" review "infinitive with to". And there are also some other mistakes in that sentence. Next, "Mobile phones expose to radiation" in this sentence you used a wrong verb; look at the meaning of expose. I think, you had better you another verb. Again, you need to rewrite the next two sentences "This is canser's and genetic damage's resault.If we can healty life, we don't use mobile phones. There are different mistakes like spelling and the use of apostrophe 's. and also in the second sentence you didn't used the main verb in the if clause.

Fourth paragraph, "IN" my opinion and mobile phones is/ ARE sometimes necessary. And rewrite the last sentence. Finally, rewrite the last sentence.

My advice: you should use the grammar structures which you learned during lessons. And also you should look up the dictionary for the spelling of the words you use in your writing. If you take your writing serious, you can do better.

Hakkımda



http://...blogspot.com/2011/02/big-city-life/ 13/02/11 - 20/02... adlı kişi... adlı top...

BIG CITY LIFE

Living in big cities has got advantages but at the same time it has got disadvantages of course.

In the big cities, easy to find a job because there are lots of companies. You can work this companies. Besides, you can benefit lots of social activities. You can go concerts, theatres, sports center and mall for a shopping. Big cities are cosmopolitan cities. There are lots of people from different cultures. So you can learn something about this cultures.

There are disadvantages living in big cities. They are very crowded. So, traffic is dense and security problems are become. Big cities are expensive i think. You must work too much for earn money. And finally, Big cities are noisy and dirty.

Living in big cities not only beautiful but also difficult.

Gönderen zaman: 00:30

Bunu Google'da öner

Tepkiler: ☐ eğlenceli (0) ☐ ilginç (0) ☐ etkileyici (0)

2 yorum:



23 Şubat 2011 23:14

hi let's check it now second paragraph 'something' you wrote the wrong 'something' should write third paragraph 'I think big cities are expensive' 'traffic is dense so there are problems' I Think you can write this sentence is this I could not find another in the wrong=))

Yanıtla



24 Şubat 2011 13:00

thank you very very much buddy;) But im not join you, because there is a traffic problems in big cities not because of the expensive but because of the dense population.

Bu siteye ka

Google Friend Con

Üyeler (7)

Zaten üye misiniz?

Hakkımda

Profilimin tamamı görüntüle

http://blogspot.com/2011/02/in-other-to... 13/02/11 - 20/02... adlı kişi adlı top...

IN ORHER TO HAPPY (second draft)

Happiness can be defined in many ways.

In order to happy, you should know to enjoy. When you spend enjoyable time with your friends and family, you can enjoy. And a graduate. In the graduating party, you can enjoy with music and dancing. Then, you find a first job. This, you will be happy. Of course chocolate i think i love it. If you eat chocolate, you will be happy. Because it epidemics happiness hormone.

As you see, happiness can be defined in many ways. For example it is enjoying your life, graduating and chocolate of course :)

Gönderen zaman: 13:05

M B t f g +1 Bunu Google'da öner

Tepkiler: ☐ eğlenceli (0) ☐ ilginç (0) ☐ etkileyici (0)

1 yorum:

 26 Şubat 2011 17:52

Hi

Let's check it.

Before we start, I want to say that your headline's correct form is "in order to BE happy".

Introduction: a very short introduction. You should add something to make your it charming. For example you can add a famous speech about happiness.

Second paragraph: the mistake in the first sentence is the same mistake with you headline, then in the second part of the sentence, it is better to say "you should know HOW to enjoy IT. Next, rewrite the second sentence because you used enjoy and enjoyable again and again, just like the third and the fourth sentence. Also the third sentence is not a sentence, it is a fragment. Make it a sentence. And then, check your sentence which stars with "then, you find a first job." You can revise it in this way: "then IT is finding you first job. Also the next sentence needs checking. Finally, last sentence has also a problem. "Epidemics" is not a verb, you should use "release" instead of it.

Conclusion: a fine finishing.

My advice: check the mistakes especially in the developmental paragraph. Then rewrite it. The final will be better.

Bu sitede ka
Google Friend Con

Üyeler (7)

Zaten üye misiniz?

Hakkımda

Profilimin tamamı
görüntüle

http://...blogspot.com/2011/02/world-... 13/02/11 - 20/02... dli kiği... adlı to...

THE WORLD OF HAPPINESS (FIRST DRAFT)

The search for happiness is one of the chief sources of unhappiness. Yes, it's true because happiness is always in our lives. A smile, a word, a thought and sometimes all the small things.

Happiness you could do. You are achievements, freedom, emotions. It's everything. Sometimes people don't be aware but happiness is always our side. When you fall in love, get promoted, learn new something, someone tells you good something is always a smile on your face. People see the light in your eyes but sometimes we feel lonely. Then we have to do new something. For example; you can visit your friends, owning a pet or to be aware of all the people who love you. You should be aim because have something to aim for; a dream that you hold close. This isn't happiness? My dreams; learn english, be graduate, go to abroad, good a work and future and of course I am hopeful I'll do my all dreams. When I get bored, I get down I'm happy thinking about these dreams.

Actually, happiness change from people to people. Some people's family, work, friends, lover, wife, husband. I think happiniess is incredible, unhappiness is an excuse. Everythin might not work, sometimes bad things can come over and over but you look around, the world spinning, we are healty and the most importantly our heart still beats.

Gönderen zaman: 14:56

Bunu Google'da öner

1 yorum:

21 Şubat 2011 09:00

Hi when there you corrects errors I hopefully you will have a better text. Firstly...owning a pet or to be aware...have already become 'aware' that you say do not need 'to be aware'. I dont understand what this sentence meant 'Some people's family, work, friends, lover, wife, husband.' Also not 'everythin' it is 'everything'. There is so much more I hope, I'm able to find.)

Bu site
Google Friend
Üyeler (2)
Zaten üye mis
Blog Arşivi
▼ 2011 (8)
▼ Şubat (8)
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Hakkımda

<http://blogspot.com/2011/02/happinessfir:>

13/02/11 - 20/02...

adlı kişi...



HAPPINESS IN EVERY MOMENT OF LIFE

Happiness is a lot need in life so it's very important for people.A lot of pundit told the many allegation the about happiness.As John Barrymore said that "Happiness often sneaks in thought a door you did not know you left open."

Happiness is freedom because it has got free thought so people are making your own decisious.Happiness is comfortable feeling so people have got self-confidence.Happiness is get promoted so people be successful in the job to rise up and they are to gain experience.Happiness is causen competition in the job so job's qality increase.Happiness is get married because people are together have breakfast.It is enjoyable,elegant.People are together go to the holiday so they are to enjoy the sea and the sunbathe.

Aa a result, we should be happy from our do every job.If not life is become impracticable.Rigth now,we start to war for this.

Gönderen : zaman: 04:36


[Bunu Google'da öner](#)

1 yorum:



:):) 21 Şubat 2011 07:55

Hi :):)At first you must check using capital letter for example "LIFE"Then you have got some mistakes about speelling of wors.For example "aa a result qality sunbathe "they are must be like this :as a result ,quality ,sunbath. Then :in second paragraph,you should check the using possessive adjectives for example:"people are making your own decision"this sentence can be making their own decisions "

Then in the following sentence you should can use "easy in order to ""comfortable"

You should revise the using grunds 8 infinitive example:"happiness is get" this must be "is getting "or you can use "passive voice"here

Then "people are together have breakfast "is a wrong sentence.this can be "people have breakfast together"

Then "people arew together got to theis sentence" is wrong too it must be people gp to together

In english ,prepositions are used at the end of the sentence.An axiliary verb must be used before the verb in the sentence.Good Luck☺☺

Üyeler (2)



Zaten üye misin?

BLOG ARŞİVİ

▼ 2011 (8)

▼ Şubat (8)

HAPPINE

BIG CITY

HAPPINE

HAPPINE

BIG CITY

MOBLE I

DRAF

BIG CITY

MOBILE

HAKKIMDA

 arzu kesik

Profilimin tamamı

http://...blogspot.com/2011/02/happinessse... 13/02/11 - 20/02... adlı kişi...

HAPPINESS IN EVERY MOMENT OF LIFE

Happiness is a lot need in life so it's very important for people. A lot of pundit told the many allegation the about happiness. As John Barrymore said that "Happiness often sneaks in thought a door you did not know you left open."

Happiness is freedom because it has got free thought so people are making their own decisions. Happiness is comfortable feeling so people have got self-confidence. Happiness is get promoted so people be successful in the job to rise up and they are to gain experience. Happiness is caused competition in the job so job's quality increase. Happiness is getting married because people have breakfast together. It is enjoyable, elegant. People are go to the holiday together so they to enjoy the sea and the sunbath.

As a result, we should be happy from our do every job. If not life is become impracticable. Right now, we start to war for this.

Gönderen : 1 zaman: 08:11

[M](#) [B](#) [t](#) [f](#) [+](#)1 [Bunu Google'da öner](#)

1 yorum:

 22 Şubat 2011 08:51

Hi

Let's start checking.

Introduction: firstly, there is a problem in your first sentence, rewrite it. In the second, do not use "the" after allegation. And then, check John Barrymore's speech for spelling or wrong word usage.

Second paragraph: you used an irrelevant linking word. In addition, you should use the last part of the sentence which starts with "so..." in the present simple form. Next, check the third sentence for wrong verb formation, and also the sentence has a mechanical problem, namely

Zaten üye misiniz? [Otur](#)

BLOG ARŞIVI

▼ 2011 (8)

▼ Şubat (8)

HAPPINESS

BIG CITY(FI

HAPPINESS DRAFT)

HAPPINESS

BIG CITY(SI

MOBILE PH DRAFT)

BIG CITY (F

MOBILE PH draft)

HAKKIMDA

 arzu keskin

Profilimin tamam

http://...blogspot.com/2011/02/most-big-city-1 13/02/11 - 20/02/11 adlı kişi adlı topluluğa g...

(first draft) BIG DIFFERENCE IN THE CITY

Most of the big city to live every aspect of course is easier to but still would be forced to times.

Big city has many advantages. There are more options for social life. We can go any time we want such as film or theater. We have the chance to spend time with friends and more fun and different. Things we want to more easily consumed in large cities. If I lived in a smaller place the life is squeezed from every angle be routine. A vicious cycle would be just like home from work. Educational services is more common in big city. Depending on the individuals, it grows more conscious. Also it's easier to find work in cities. Because there are more job opportunities. Everybody wants to work here.

There are disadvantages as well as the big city to live. The first of the problems as you know traffic. We may be stuck in traffic most of the time and we would go get more time. If you're going home from work is more tiring and boring. Increased air pollution due to growing industry so polluted atmosphere and living life difficult for. How was your biggest problem is actually not understand time. We always need to work due to difficulties of living in the big city would be brought so we may be forced to spend time with loved ones. This also weakens the relationships between people.

Still more dvantageous to live in the big city because I think all you want and comfortable all the time I get to opportunity to perform.

Gönderen ...

M t f +1 Bunu Google'da öner

1 yorum:

... 17 Şubat 2011 10:11

hi my friend :) DIFFERENCE OF THE BIG CITY'S is better.

firstly "There are a lot of options for social life." We can go every time want such as film or theater. "We have the chance to spend time with our friends ". Things we want to more easily consumed in large cities. Elf what you mean i don't understand this sentence

second paragraph we may be stuck in traffic most of the time and we would go get more it has got mistake at this sentence but I can't find right:(not forced it is forced

fourth paragraph it is advantageous not dvantageous I think big city gives you the opportunity to perform yes I saw this as I said maybe wrong we'll see=)=)

http://...blogspot.com/2011/02/second-draft-b 13/02/11 - 20/02... adlı kişi adlı topluluğa g...

(second draft) BIG DIFFERENCE IN THE CITY

Most of the big city to live every aspect of course is easier to but still would be forced to times.

Big city has many advantages. There are a lot of options for social life. We can go every time we want such as film or theater. We have the chance to spend time with our friends and more fun and different things we want to more easily consumed in large cities. If I lived in a smaller place the life is squeezed from every angle be routine. A vicious cycle would be just like home from work. Educational services is more common in big city. Depending on the individuals, it grows more conscious. Also it's easier to find work in cities. Because there are more job opportunities. Everybody wants to work here.

There are disadvantages as well as the big city to live. The first of the problems as you know traffic. We may be stuck in traffic most of the time and we would go get more time. If you're going home from work is more tiring and boring. Increased air pollution due to growing industry so polluted atmosphere and living life difficult for. How was your biggest problem is actually not understand time. We always need to work due to difficulties of living in the big city would be brought so we may be forced to spend time with loved ones. This also weakens the relationships between people.

Still more advantageous to live in the big city because I think all you want and comfortable all the time I get to opportunity to perform.

Gönderen: ...

Bunu Google'da öner

1 yorum:

e ... 21 Şubat 2011 12:47

Hi again

Now it is time for your second writing. Let's start.

Introduction: rewrite the sentence in this part.

Second paragraph: in the third sentence instead of "every time", you can use "whenever". The following sentence has a problem after the first "and". Then, the next sentence which starts with "things we want..." is wrong, rewrite this sentence in a different way. Also in this paragraph the use of if clause is grammatically wrong. You should revise it, too. After that, vicious circle is a good example but the sentence has a problem, try to write it in the correct way.

Third paragraph: to start disadvantages you can change the flow of your writing

http://.blogspot.com/2011/02/final-draft-big- 13/02/11 - 20/02... adlı kişi adlı topluluğa g...

22 Şubat 2011 Salı

(final draft) BIG DIFFERENCE IN THE CITY

Of course easier to live in the big city but we could, but still sometimes have difficulty. Big city has many advantages. There are a lot of options for social life. We can go every time we want such as film or theater. We have the chance to spend time with our friends and more fun and different. Things we want to more easily consumed in large cities. If I lived in a smaller place the life is squeezed from every angle be routine. Live in the big city like a vicious circle because you need to work have exists and acquire a lifestyle home from work in the form of..Educational services is more common in big city. Depending on the individuals, it grows more conscious. Also it's easier to find work in cities. Because there are more job opportunities. Everybody wants to work here.

There are disadvantages as well as the big city to live. The first of the problems as you know traffic. Most of time we can stay stuck in traffic and traffic passes through most of our time..If you're going home from work is more tiring and boring. It poisons the atmosphere of increased air pollution due to industrial development..How was your biggest problem is actually not understand time. We always need to work due to difficulties of living in the big city would be brought so we may be forced to spend time with loved ones. This also weakens the relationships between people.

Lives in the big city problem even, if I'm in favor of still living in the big city because you can do everything you want when you want it. Also you can benefit from more culture, education, health services such as.

Gönderen

M B f +1 Bunu Google'da öner

Appendix F

Pre-Test and Post-Test Papers

WRITING PRE-TEST

Name & Surname: Student 9

Choose ONE of the following topics and written essay about it.

1. Advantages and disadvantages of the Internet.
2. Advantages and disadvantages of the prep classes.

Internet for life

Internet is important to our need. Such as; There are a lot of information and news in Internet. Internet has advantages. This advantages are listen to music, watch film, play a game, study lesson, read news, (online) to information, online shopping. Internet has disadvantages spend a lot of time, We go away from social life.

WRITING POST-TEST

Name & Surname: Student 9

Choose ONE of the following topics and write an essay about it.

1. Advantages and disadvantages of the Internet.
2. Advantages and disadvantages of the prep classes.

INTERNET AND LIFE

Internet is very important to for people nowadays. Every people use internet. Every home also uses internet. Internet makes life easier.

Internet has got for disadvantages. It's enjoyable. for example; We play games. Such as; Need for Speed. for example; We listen music. Such as; Trauian. We make investigation Such as; Education. for example. We investigation lesson. It provide communication. for example; We talking with friends. Such as; Msn, Facebook. We send e-mail. Such as; G-mail.

Internet has got disadvantages. It's unhealthy. for example; It causes radiation. If we viewing very much. We will eye problem. It's waste time. If we using very much. We will fail on one's class. If we using very much. we will social life hamper.

As a result; Internet has got advantages and disadvantages. But we are using. It indispensable for me.

WRITING PRE-TEST

Name & Surname: Student 2

Choose ONE of the following topics and write an essay about it.

1. Advantages and disadvantages of the Internet.
2. Advantages and disadvantages of the prep classes.

Internet and Life

Internet is important for our need. For example, there are a lot of information and news in internet. Also, we listen to music and watch film on the net.

Internet has got other advantages. It is very important for communication. Such as; we speak friends, we send e-mail. We do shopping on the net.

Also, internet has got disadvantages. We spend a lot of time on the net. We go away from social life.

WRITING POST-TEST

Name & Surname: Student 2

Choose ONE of the following topics and write an essay about it.

1. Advantages and disadvantages of the Internet.
2. Advantages and disadvantages of the prep classes.

INTERNET AND LIFE

A lot of people use the internet and internet is efec-
tive to life nowadays. Sometimes internet makes life
easier and sometimes do difficulty.

The net has got some advantages. For example; play
games, get information and chat. Even old people
play games on the net. Like online games, knight online and download
games. People get information on the net, such as; wikipedia.
A lot of people follow the news on the net. and chat on the
net, like facebook. People send e-mail to friends for
celebrate their birthdays.

Also, the net has got some disadvantages. People spend
time on the net, because of their slow down works.
If is there a not cable modem, there is a radiation. Radiation
is harmful for health. Sometimes the net don't ^{is} secure.
For example; hackers can find our informations and they can
use these informations.

As a result, the net has got advantages and disadvantages.
But we are using the net on computer, mobile phones and we don't see
disadvantages, a lot of times we're using the net.

WRITING PRE-TEST

Name & Surname: Student E

Choose ONE of the following topics and write an essay about it.

1. Advantages and disadvantages of the Internet.
2. Advantages and disadvantages of the prep classes.

Advantages and disadvantages of prep classes

I think it is a good prep classes because English is important for my job and I'd like to improve my English.

Actually some people see it unnecessary. I think disadvantages begins with this idea but I don't think so because it is a good opportunity to learn English prep classes. Actually there are courses for learning English and it paid too much money and this is sometimes not enough.

I think the prep classes haven't disadvantages but this is changing from person to person.

WRITING POST-TEST

Name & Surname: Student E

Choose ONE of the following topics and write an essay about it.

1. Advantages and disadvantages of the Internet.
2. Advantages and disadvantages of the prep classes.

THE INTERNET and WE

We always use internet and today internet has become the most powerful tool for man throughout the world but of course it has got advantages and disadvantages

I'd like to start with advantages. Firstly the internet provides communication among people. When you miss your friends or family you can communicate this way with them and also video talk. At the same time you can look at job, do the shopping, do research on a topic you don't know. For example, about history, maybe about models (ship or aircraft). Next advantage of internet is email. It is very good because when you want to send something for example to friend from another country. You can send email whatever you want, movies, photos, songs. Other on the hand you can transfer money on the internet and it is more faster than bank procedures in. Actually you can do everything.

But internet has some disadvantages. You spend too much time sitting in the front of computer and this is harmful for eyes. You just sitting and play game, watching video, listen to music, chat with your friends. You forget everyone and just focus on it. Actually it causes you feel tired.

As you see the internet is necessary but at the same time unhealthy. I think we don't give up the use of the internet because we need to new information, talk to our friends.

WRITING PRE-TEST

Name & Surname: Student H

Choose ONE of the following topics and write an essay about it.

1. Advantages and disadvantages of the Internet.
2. Advantages and disadvantages of the prep classes.

THE BIGGEST INVENT (INTERNET)

Internet is very important for human in 21st century. Our world is changing all the time so it must catch up with newness. We need Internet for communication.

In Turkey, human uses Internet all the time. For example, The government keep their citizen information and it does all official procedure on the net. Internet use in our education system because it's quicker everything. Moreover students study lesson on the net. Internet isn't usefull every time. The scientists says, 'If you use Internet all the time, it's very dangerous for you. 70% of Turkish teenagers use too much Internet. The average Turkish teenagers spend 14 hours on the net every day. If you spend a lot of time on the net you grow semia and your brain cells die. If you don't want to be stupid you musn't spend a lot of time.

As a result, catch up the mobile world but don't become addict. Spend more time with your family, friends. If you don't give up internet get ready your life is monotonous.

WRITING POST-TEST

Name & Surname: Student H

Choose ONE of the following topics and write an essay about it.

1. Advantages and disadvantages of the Internet.

2. Advantages and disadvantages of the prep classes.

— FED UP —

In Turkey, foreign languages are important for education. So I'm a student in Prep. Class. Because I want to go to Europe where I was graduated at University. "Being a student in Prep. Class" this state isn't good every time.

In first days, everything is very enjoyable. New class, new friends, new experiences. The teachers are very kind. They want to teach perfect English us. I think when you was in Prep. Class learning new culture more important than learning foreign languages. In addition learning foreign language is an essential part of life, like breath. Never you say "learning foreign language is very difficult". Because when you want to learn something, anything isn't difficult. If you learn alot of foreign languages, you can find a job easily. I think you must go Prep. Class. In addition you have a lot of free time when you being a student in Prep. Class. So you can go everywhere with your friends. Cinema, AVM, Migros etc. You can work in part time job if you want it.

But cat don't eat cream everytime. Being a student in Prep. Class is good but it's got some disadvantages. Firstly If you can learn foreign languages quickly you might be bored, like me. Because I was very bored. In book, Units are usually same. So you must repeat same subjects. In addition I must get up early every morning because Lessons start at 8:30. I stay in Gulluk so I must get up at 7 o'clock. Then If you come to school by bus, You ready! It's a scann because the busses are very crowded in mornings. I'm fed up with getting early eve morning. It run out of my life, I want to more sleep.

As a result, if you want to being a student in Prep. Class you think it carefully. It's isn't good idea for you maybe. You might fed up with learning English. Because I even fed up with it.

Appendix G**The Blog Use Evaluation Questionnaire**

The Blog Use Evaluation Questionnaire				
In this questionnaire, your opinions of the blog use for writing lessons will be taken. The data you give will totally be used for a scientific study. By completing this questionnaire, you will accept to be a participant to the study. Your participation is voluntary. Being a participant will not have a positive/negative effect on the grades you get from the lesson.				
1	Department/Program			
2	Gender:	Male	Female	
3	How do you describe your computer use skills?	Well	Mediocre	Poor
4	How often do you use the Internet?	Often	Sometimes	Never
5	Using blogs in writing lessons contributed to my writing skill.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
6	I believe that using blogs in writing lessons is a good method.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
7	I liked doing my writing homework via using blog.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
8	My peers' feedbacks to my posts on my blog were beneficial.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
9	Using blog in writing lesson improved my writing skill.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
10	Giving feedback to my peers contributed to my writing skill.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
11	I offer having writing lessons via using blogs to my friends.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
12	I felt more comfortable while doing my writing homework via using blogs.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
13	Rereading my posts on my blog later on motivated me to write again.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
14	Writing lesson which we had via using blogs improved my in and out of class communication with my peers.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
15	I benefited from feedback I got from my peers by using blogs.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
16	I benefited from feedback I got from my teacher by using blogs.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
17	If I had this lesson again, I would prefer to use blog again.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
18	Using blogs in writing lessons did not contribute to my writing skill.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
19	I did not benefit from feedback that I got from my teacher by using blogs.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
20	I did not benefit from feedback that I got from my peers by using blogs.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
21	If I had this lesson again, I would not prefer to use blog again.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
22	I had problems while using blogs.	Agree	Not sure	Disagree
23	Your further opinions and suggestion on using blogs for writing classes.			

Appendix H

Scoring Rubric

Scoring Rubrics: Essays

	Maximum Score	Actual Score
Format – 5 points Title centered (2), First line of each paragraph intended (2) margins left on both sides (1)	5	
Punctuation and Mechanics – 5 points Periods, commas, apostrophes and quotation marks (3) Capital letters (1) Spelling (1)	5	
Content – 20 points The essay fulfils the requirements of the assignment. (5) The essay is interesting. (5) The essay shows that the writer used care and thought. (10)	20	
Organization – 45 points The essay follows the outline, and it has an introduction, a body, and a conclusion. (5) Introductory Paragraph: The introductory paragraph begins with several general sentences and ends with a thesis statement. (5) Body Each paragraph of the body discusses a new point and begins with a clear topic sentence. (5) Each paragraph has specific supporting material: facts, examples, quotations, paraphrased or summarized information, and so on. (10) Each paragraph has unity. (5) Each paragraph has coherence. (5) Transitions are used to link paragraphs. (5) Concluding Paragraph: The concluding paragraph summarizes the main points or paraphrases the thesis statement, begins with a conclusion signal, and leaves the reader with the writer's final thoughts on the topic. (5)	45	
Grammar and Sentence Structure – 25 points Estimate a grammar and sentence structure score.	25	
Grand Total	100	

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